New Statesman

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Man of war

The career of General Edward Rowny, Reagan's chief disarmer

Sex and the Tories — Part II

The Architect as Architect

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 105 No 2714 25 March 1983

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This time there is room

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS as if there are continuously repeating patterns in the economic history of Europe over the last quarter century. The reports and headlines this week about exchange rate crises (resolved only by the devaluation of the franc and a revaluation of the German mark) or about the political leadership of the Labour Party coming to some 'understanding' with the TUC about the context of wage bargaining under a future Labour government could almost have been taken straight from the 1960s or the 1970s.

The claims put forward by Euro-fanatics, like Messrs Heath and Jenkins, in favour of the European Monetary System have, however, once again been knocked on the head. The EMS does not create monetary stability for those currencies within it. The truth, demonstrated by EMS crisis after EMS crisis, is that the system holds so long as there is no fundamental tension between the economies of its member states; and breaks apart as soon as there is.

The Mitterrand devaluation and austerity programme have uncanny echoes of the 1966 Wilson government (with the difference only that French governments do not make defence of the national currency a matter of national honour). They raise uneasy questions about whether an incoming Labour government this year or next would be equally stopped from fulfilling its manifesto commitments for advancing socialism in one country.

It is certainly true that national economies and industries for countries like Britain are ever more closely integrated. This places a limit on the extent to which a single country can pursue an economic and industrial policy that is diametrically opposed to that of its principal trading partners for any prolonged period. This would make it essential that a British Labour government, with the French and others, should take joint international initiatives to counter the damaging economic nihilism of the Reagan-Thatcher years.

But other objective factors will be much better for any new government taking office now in this country than was the case in 1966 and 1967. First, Mrs Thatcher and her Chancellor have already achieved since last autumn a very large part of the sterling devaluation that Mr Shore was putting forward as a hypothetical basis as Labour's policy last autumn – for which, incidentally, he was much derided by the Tories and their allies. But, more important, when an economy is running at anything like full employment, the dynamic effects on exports and general demand that can be expected to come from devaluation can only be achieved, if resources are freed by taking steps to curb domestic demand. In the current state of the British economy, there would be no need to face such politically difficult choices. □

Total lack of authority

CITY AND BOARDROOM melodrama still dominated stories about the goings-on at TV-am. Not enough attention has been given to the way in which the story has shown up the impotence and incompetence of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, which is supposed to regulate commercial television. At the end of 1980 the IBA awarded a breakfast television franchise to a consortium got together by Mr David Frost and chaired by Mr Peter Jay. It did so after prolonged written and oral examination of the proposals put forward by competing consortia.

Within weeks of its going on the air the IBA has ended up with the TV-am franchise in effect in quite different hands. It is, to put it no higher, extremely unlikely that the IBA would have granted a franchise to a consortium of which Lord Marsh was the chairman and Mr Jonathan Aitken the (even temporary) chief executive. For the IBA to have allowed itself to get into a position where it had to accept a sitting MP as the chief executive of a commercial television station (and at a moment when we could within weeks be in a general election campaign at that) only serves to bring the whole system further into disrepute. After the event, the IBA is putting it about that it is insisting that Mr Aitken's tenure should be short. But its initial and instinctive reaction was to say that the whole thing was 'primarily a matter for the company's board to determine.'

It has been a long and typical tale of how the British establishment works. The IBA, then under Lady Plowden, was persuaded during 1979 – half against its better judgement – to invite applications for a breakfast TV franchise.

But what purpose should breakfast TV serve? In principle, the IBA was clear. It wanted something that would be fresh and certainly unlike American-style breakfast TV chat shows. The invitation to prospective applicants was specific. The contract, if awarded at all, would be 'for a service consisting primarily, but not exclusively, of news, information and current affairs.' This, the IBA thought, might inject a new element into commercial television and meet a public need.

That was the sole basis on which Lady Plowden's IBA said it would even consider breakfast TV. But, on that supposed basis, it gave the franchise to a consortium of showbiz personalities, some of whom – notably Mr Frost – had been personally responsible for the catastrophic early days of the original London Weekend TV franchise and whose record was thus directly known to the IBA. It then sat distantly by, while the new company put on a service in which even the original element of news and current affairs was minimal, has already been reduced and looks like being reduced still further.

When awarding franchises, the IBA pretends to be vitally concerned with proposals for programme content, the managerial experience and competence and the financial resources of the consortia applying. If its concerns in these areas are real and legitimate, it cannot simply forget about them once a franchise is granted. (In that case, subject to laws not being broken, the IBA might as well sell franchises to the highest bidder.) In fact, on the public's behalf, it is handing over a valuable broadcasting monopoly to a private commercial concern and it should be required to take its supervisory responsibilities thereafter a great deal more seriously than it has done in the past. □

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Radioactive factories cause Welsh scare

THE MINISTRY of Defence has provided new details about the discharge of radioactive materials into the environment from its nuclear weapons factory at Llanishen, in the suburbs of Cardiff. The key materials, whose handling at the Cardiff Royal Ordnance Factory is a matter of increasing local concern, are beryllium and depleted uranium. Both metals are assembled at Cardiff into parts for hydrogen bombs.

In a separate development, a secretive Hertfordshire engineering firm has applied to a North Wales district council for permission to build a new factory to manufacture parts from depleted uranium and tungsten at Mostyn, Clwyd, on the Dee estuary near Flint. The company, CSW Engineering of Hemel Hempstead, has persistently refused to say what products it manufactures, or what it would make from depleted uranium at the new factory at Mostyn. Company directors say only that they have 'MoD contracts', have 'no plans', and refuse to answer press enquiries.

The Ministry of Defence's Directorate of Atomic Weapons Production, which runs the two nuclear warhead factories at Cardiff and Burghfield, near Reading, has stated in letters to South Glamorgan Council that 50 tons of natural or depleted uranium is held in Cardiff. The factory is also authorised to discharge radioactivity into the local environment – a heavily built-up residential area – by hitherto confidential permits issued by the Welsh Office.

Details of radioactive discharges to local sewers have been published in Welsh Office reports, but the MoD has now admitted, for the first time, that comparable quantities of radioactivity are emitted from 2 chimney stacks, each 80 feet high, at the plant. The total radiactivity allowed into the skies over Cardiff each year is about 16 milli-Curies. The authorised level of discharge into sewers is 8 times larger; more than one Curie per year.

This might be a relatively inconsequential amount, well dispersed in a remote area – which Cardiff is not. But the Ministry of Defence has not given any details of which radioactive substances are involved or how they may be spread into the atmosphere. Heavier particles of uranium, which are released through machining, could concentrate in housing estates down wind of the discharge chimneys.

Lower level wastes, including radioactive beryllium – a probable result of disassembling old British atomic bombs – are taken by the 'National Disposal Service' to the radioactive waste dump at Drigg, in Cumbria.

Depleted uranium – the main metal handled at Cardiff and the proposed new factory in Clwyd – is a residue from the extraction of one uranium isotope, U^{235}, whose instability, and consequent radioactivity, makes it suitable as fuel for both atomic weapons and reactors. Original, natural uranium is thus 'depleted' of U^{235}.

Rolled into sheets and special castings, depleted uranium forms the shell and some of the fuel of an H-bomb. The depleted uranium shell reflects and contains an initial atomic explosion for sufficient time to consume the thermonuclear fuel – principally tritium, made at the UKAEA's Chapelcross reactor near Dumfries. The use of depleted uranium also makes hydrogen bombs extremely dirty and much more damaging, by greatly increasing the levels of radioactive fallout. In a third stage of a hydrogen bomb detonation, the uranium itself fissions to release further energy.

The other material handled in Cardiff is beryllium, an extremely toxic light element heavily used in atomic bomb manufacture. A beryllium shell around the bomb's plutonium core reflects neutrons as an explosion starts, thus maximising the bomb's 'yield'.

A special nationwide register on the toxic effects of low levels of beryllium has been kept in Cardiff since a local specialist, Dr W. Jones Williams, first noted the dangers after an accident at the nuclear weapons factory in 1963. A machinist cut his finger on a grinding wheel contaminated with beryllium oxide. The wound would not heal, and 15 months later his finger was amputated. Six months after the amputation, ulcerative nodules had to be removed from the man's arm; five years later, they had recurred, and it was discovered that similar nodules had grown in his lungs – the result of airborne beryllium contamination.

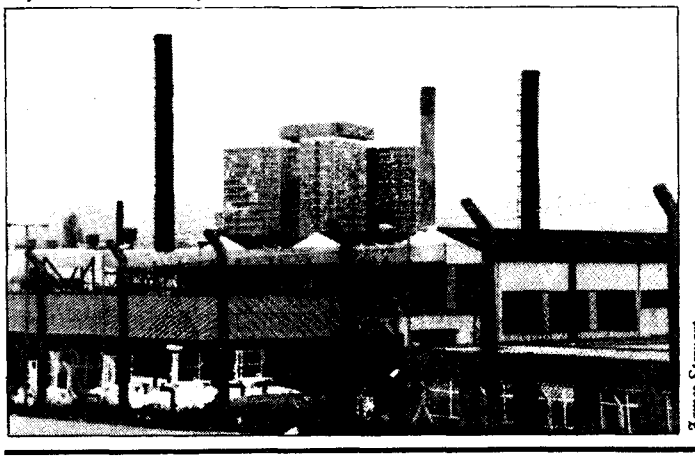
By 1978, one third of the cases on Dr Jones Williams's national register of chronic berylliosis cases were fatalities. He was unwilling to divulge how many cases concerned the Cardiff factory.

The planning application for the depleted uranium factory in Clwyd is still being considered by Delyn District Council – whose officials have advised councillors to disregard Clwyd County Council's declaration of a nuclear-free county in hearing the application. This, they say, is 'only a statement of policy' and 'not intended to prevent the use of mildly radioactive substances'. Officials who visited CSW Engineering Ltd's existing factory in Hemel Hempstead were told that depleted uranium was used in 'aircraft balance weights' and 'medical equipment'. However, CSW's directors refused to discuss with the *New Statesman* whether or not these claims were true.

Questioned on its contracts with the Hertfordshire firm, the MoD said this week that 'yacht keels' were a common civil use for depleted uranium. However, their procurement records, they said, only showed contracts with CSW for the purchase of tungsten parts for anti-tank mines. If the new factory were set up, it would handle about 100 tons of uranium a year, most of it originating from a stockpile at the enrichment plant at Capenhurst, Cheshire.

Duncan Campbell and James Stewart

Royal Ordnance Factory in Cardiff: radioactive chimneystacks



James Stewart

Safeguards 'not against nuclear arms'

THE INTERNATIONAL safeguards that apply to Britain's nuclear installations are *not* designed to prevent the diversion of civil materials to military uses. This rather startling fact – which flatly contradicts assurances given by the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) – was confirmed last week during the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's cross-examination of the Department of Energy at the Sizewell B public inquiry in Suffolk.

The credibility of all international attempts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons is based on maintaining a clear distinction between the peaceful and warlike uses of nuclear technology. Safeguards administered by the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) since the early 1960s, and the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which came into force in 1970, attempt to encourage the spread of civil nuclear facilities while at the same time trying to prevent those facilities from being used to acquire nuclear weapons.

In 1973 Britain's nuclear facilities became subject to Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community) safeguards procedures. Then in 1978, under a tripartite agreement between Britain, Euratom and the IAEA, Britain volunteered its nuclear activities for IAEA safeguards.

In his proof of evidence to the Sizewell inquiry, senior CEGB board member John Baker said that this arrangement 'underlined the government's and the CEGB's intention that plutonium produced in CEGB reactors will not be diverted for weapons purposes'. But at last week's hearing the Department of Energy's main witness, Robert Priddle, denied that this was the case. He said that the government had no current intention of using civil facilities for military purposes, but that this was not the point of the safeguards.

A recent parliamentary answer made it clear that the safeguards arrangement 'was not intended to provide an assurance to other governments that material from the civil nuclear programme would not be used for defence purposes'. The point instead was to encourage states without nuclear weapons to adhere to the non-proliferation treaty. It is, in short, another manifestation of a familiar but dangerous division: one law for those countries with nuclear weapons, and another for those without them.

Rob Edwards

Rob Edwards is coordinating CND's case at the Sizewell inquiry and is author of The Plutonium Connection: Sizewell B and the Bomb, *due to be published next month.*

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Breakfast television: was the IBA to blame?

Camera Press

Camera Press

Ex-chairpersons: IBA's Plowden and TV-am's Jay

THE MOST astonishing aspect of TV-am's well-publicised troubles is that so far the Independent Broadcasting Authority has escaped almost any share of the blame for them. In fact, there are many who feel that the IBA is culpable both of having made an ill-judged franchise award in the first place, and then of undermining its chances of success by imposing too long a timetable for its launch.

Competition for the breakfast TV channel was fierce, with eight applicant groups bidding for the franchise. TV-am's victory surprised many of the other contenders, who believed that the IBA had been blinded by the glittering names. 'It was a monstrous naivety,' affirmed one disappointed applicant, 'the selection panel were like groupies holding out autograph books'.

The awarding of the new television franchises in December 1980 was intended as the swan-song of Lady Plowden, the retiring chairman of the IBA. To her credit, the IBA determined to go for a group which intended offering *serious* programming. 'Having made that decision', said one of the bankers who studied all the applications, 'TV-am was the logical choice. It had the right mix, with the glamour of the five presenters and the seriousness of Peter Jay.'

Another consortium headed by Harold Lever, David Elstein and Jonathan Dimbleby, was also clearly a serious operation, but the latter two had reputations for being involved in radical programming. The IBA accordingly eliminated them.

Jay, however, was not a controversial figure, and he did put an eloquent case to the selection panel for his much-vaunted 'mission to explain', elaborating on theories he had first expounded with John Birt (now Director of Programmes, London Weekend Television) in a series of articles in *The Times* in 1975. He referred to TV-am as 'a Noah's ark for decent, serious journalism'.

There were two inherent flaws in Jay's philosophy. It seemed rather disingenuous to choose to launch a new style of TV journalism with so many familiar presenters of the old; and breakfast television itself seemed the least suitable vehicle for the application of Jay's theories.

The IBA only compounded these difficulties because, having set the breakfast TV ball rolling, it allowed the BBC to seize the initiative, by setting a launch date of May 1983. Jay never disguised his disappointment. He said he would have preferred May 1982, and in fact there was no insuperable reason why the company could not have started broadcasting then. Furthermore, such a date would have presented problems for the BBC, which was then in the throes of changing director-generals.

Jay did persuade the IBA to advance the launch-date, but the BBC still started a fortnight earlier. 'I regarded that as very important,' commented Ron Neil, editor of the BBC's *Breakfast Time*. 'There are no prizes in journalism for coming second.'

Thus the BBC adroitly outflanked TV-am even before it went on the air. Peter Hobday, from *Newsnight*, was added to Radio 4's *Today* programme team to strengthen the appeal of the BBC's serious current affairs output, while *Breakfast Time* grabbed the mass television audience with its unashamed family fare, its Pebble-Mill-at-Eight format.

TV-am therefore suffered from a confusion of purpose from the beginning. Should it practice the principles of enlightening TV journalism which Jay had preached so forcibly? Or should it simply compete with the BBC? In the event, it chose the latter course, and Jay's principles were jettisoned virtually from the start. By the time it went on air, TV-am was trying to fulfil functions for which it had never been designed, and which had not commended it to the IBA in the first place.

The IBA had bungled the whole thing. 'With the benefit of hindsight,' said the banker, 'all the other consortia would have been better able to compete with the BBC.'

Last year David Frost and Michael Deakin, TV-am's director of programmes, co-authored a book on 'the world's worst decisions', called *I Could Have Kicked Myself*. It looks as though the IBA may well have provided them with the first addition to any new edition.

Bob Woffinden

MISCELLANY

A day in the life

On the Sunday before last, five students from London University decided to celebrate the end of term by taking a day-trip to France. They drove to Dover and, before catching the early-morning ferry, filled in the blue cards which UK nationals can use instead of passports for such outings. The five, although born in Pakistan, are British passport holders who have lived in this country since childhood. On reaching Boulogne, however, they were told to wait. After two and a quarter hours, a French policeman arrived with a simple message: 'Please to turn around and go back to Grande Bretagne.' One of the students asked for a reason. 'Monsieur, I order, you obey,' came the reply. The students duly caught the next ferry back to England. When they reached Dover, they were told that some 'officials' wanted to speak to them about the trouble in Boulogne. The students felt rather pleased, expecting an explanation of some sort. Instead, however, they were made to wait for another hour, after which they were given a severe grilling by two immigration officials. Could the students prove that they were who they said they were? Weren't they really Pakistani rather than British? They were then made to wait for another half an hour before being released, without even so much as a Camembert to show for their jolly little outing.

Wandering hands

An extremely well-placed mole tells us an alarming story about one of Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet ministers. The minister in question has apparently now become so notorious for his sudden lunges at women that female officials in his department are refusing to enter his office unaccompanied. One wonders what the Family Policy Group would have to say about it.

High livers

If you have ever wondered about the life-style of the average stockbroker, you need look no further than *SEDOL*. The *Stock Exchange Daily Official List*, to give it its full title, is not the kind of magazine to touch the depths of your being but it is essential reading for many in the City. At the end of each day's trading, its 100-odd closely typed pages provide the details of all officially-quoted securities. Since late last year its publishers, the Council of the Stock Exchange, have clad the pages of figures with a glossy cover, laden with advertising. It is here that one gains an insight into the living standards of *SEDOL*'s readers. There are frequent ads for shooting holidays, private schools, safe deposit boxes, expensive wines and cigars, vintage ports and exclusive riverside flats in London for up to £300,000 each. Most revealing of all, perhaps, is an advert, headed 'Does someone you love love the bottle too much?', for a Surrey nursing home for alcoholics.

Mug shots

Both Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbit recently sent their best wishes to the Jobs For Youth Campaign. They also donated signed photographs of themselves. At a fund-raising auction, held in Aberdeen, Mrs Thatcher's photograph was sold for £18. By contrast, a signed photograph of Michael Foot raised just £2.75. Sadly, Mr Tebbit's picture arrived too late to be auctioned; but it may still be of some use as an ironic campaign poster on the People's March For Jobs.

Sold out

Last week the Department of Industry launched a £2½ million advertising campaign to 'increase awareness' of the grants and other goodies which are available to small businesses. This is rather odd, as the Department itself admits that all such goodies are already oversubscribed, so anyone who is inspired to apply for money as a result of the adverts is likely to be disappointed. The money might be better spent on promoting government services that aren't oversubscribed. For example, the most recent estimates (made in 1978-79) showed that only 15 per cent of those eligible for Family Income Supplement were actually claiming it: if this is still the case, it means that about £450 million of FIS goes unclaimed every year.

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Jimmy Knapp takes over

AS PREDICTED in last week's *New Statesman*, it was announced on Tuesday that Jimmy Knapp has been elected general secretary of the national Union of Railwaymen by an overwhelming majority. Knapp, aged 43, will now lead the union for the rest of this century. Yet he takes over at a time when not only jobs are threatened but the very existence of the railways is in jeopardy.

Knapp was the outsider in an election precipitated by the resignation of Sid Weighell, which was widely seen as a tactical ploy designed to reduce the power of the union's executive committee but which misfired when the union's annual conference accepted the resignation.

In an exclusive interview with the *NS* this week, Knapp described Weighell as 'autocratic'. He added: 'There must be a shift of power to the democratic institutions of the union. The executive and the annual conference, and all elected bodies, must come into their own.' Knapp said that the union had to get away from the sort of atmosphere in which the executive was referred to as 'a battleground' or a 'kangaroo court'.

Under Sid Weighell, the NUR's relations with the loco drivers' union ASLEF were strained. Knapp said he wanted to start a dialogue between the two unions straight away: 'I will be able to sit down over a pint and talk to Ray Buckton without any barrier'.

Relations with ASLEF will be particularly important over the coming year. As part of the protracted 1982 pay settlement, the NUR has agreed to a six-month trial of single staffing on the newly electrified 'Bedpan' line from Bedford to St Pancras. Only last week the railways' industrial troubleshooter Lord McCarthy awarded ASLEF drivers an extra £6 a week to end the long-running wrangle which has kept the new trains in Cricklewood sidings for over a year. This deal is linked to the introduction of a unified promotion ladder, so that guards can become drivers, and this part of the deal is still being discussed between the two unions and British Rail.

Knapp also emphasised the other part of the 'Bedpan' experiment, which involves reducing station staff and increasing the number of guards on trains, who will sell tickets and keep commuters informed about delays. 'If it can happen in Brussels, it can happen in London.'

During the period between 1975 and 1983, when Weighell was general secretary, the railways marked time; only the odd line was closed. Now the prospects are worse than they have been since the Beeching era. The railway workshops face compulsory redundancies; the government, headed by a Prime Minister who has not been on a train since she was elected, is openly antagonistic. The Serpell report threatens large closures, and BR gets a new chairman in September.

Knapp told the *NS* that 'we have to keep the issue of closures in the front of the country's mind. We must not allow the government to keep it under wraps until after an election.'

Under Weighell, the NUR became more politically active, particularly in Parliament, where the union employs a liaison officer to brief the MPs it sponsors. 'That is one of the good things that Sid did,' Knapp said. 'We have got to extend that beyond Parliament.'

In the popular prints Knapp has often been portrayed as the left-wing candidate. Although he was supported by the Left (and by many in the centre and Right), the characterisation is a distortion: the election was more about personalities and the power of the general secretary.

Knapp is a committed supporter of unilateral disarmament. 'I, as general secretary, will argue strongly in favour of a change to the unilateral principle,' he said. 'But the executive committee and the annual conference will decide this issue. We have to get back some respect for the democratic institutions of the union.'

Mick Hamer

Darlington issue will not go away

ONE OF the main issues that faced electors and candidates in this week's Darlington by-election was the proposed closure of British Rail's Shildon wagon works, a major employer in the constituency. But the media spotlight fell mainly on the candidates' utterances on the subject; rather less attention has been paid to the Shildon workers themselves, and their determined campaign to save their jobs.

The Shildon workers have backed their case with a detailed report which shows that the government has been deliberately running down the Shildon works and boosting its private competitors. The report, produced late last year by Shildon's joint shop stewards' committee, points out that productivity at Shildon has increased by an average of 7 per cent over the past few years. Transport minister Reginald Eyre has even described Shildon as 'the most efficient workshop in Europe'.

Despite this praise, British Rail's engineering subsidiary, BREL, has been running down operations at Shildon for the past 12 months because of a 'fall in demand'. Yet this supposed fall in demand does not seem to have affected BREL's private wagonbuilding rivals, who have stepped up production year by year, in some cases by as much as 50 per cent. One company, Procor, has grown from employing 25 people in 1970 to 1,270 in 1980.

This growth has been boosted by tax allowances and capital grants. Under Section 8 of the Railways Act these grants are available to firms building railway sidings, depots, or (since 1978) freight wagons. However, while private firms can take advantage of these grants, BREL is specifically excluded in the legislation from applying for them.

Workers at Shildon therefore feel that private firms are being helped at their expense. At the time when the closure was announced, Shildon was actually building wagons for three of its rivals – Procor, the Standard Railway Wagon Co and Mancroft. 'We could produce wagons, any type of wagons, more cheaply than the private companies, but they are getting a hidden subsidy,' says John Priestley of the shop stewards' committee.

The workers' report seems to have aroused the interest of all the three main candidates in the Darlington race, and the past week has seen all three beating a path to Unity House, home of Shildon's railway unions. However, for some of the candidates this interest was somewhat belated. When Shildon workers, together with employees at a threatened cokeworks and steelworks in the area, organised a march against job losses in Darlington recently, only one would-be MP turned up – Labour's Ossie O'Brien.

Patrick Kelly

Andrew Wiard/Report

Ossie O'Brien demonstrates for Shildon

Hard Rock is cancelled again

THE GOVERNMENT'S campaign against dissident local authorities who have declared their districts to be 'nuclear free zones', and who have refused to take part in civil defence activities, is grinding to a halt. Although new regulations on civil defence are to be laid before Parliament next month, they will be too late to save a plan to hold last year's cancelled exercise – Hard Rock – in 1983.

The Home Office is currently rewriting the proposed new civil defence regulations, and does not expect them to be presented until the middle of April at the earliest – having originally planned to have them in operation at the end of last year. Hard Rock '82 was cancelled when half of Britain's county and regional councils, and dozens of district councils, refused to participate.

By rushing new regulations through Parliament, the Home Office hoped to force Hard Rock '83 on to the councils. Now, with elections imminent, the unattractive and unconvincing shambles of civil defence has been judged best left in the closet.

Meanwhile, the *New Statesman* has learned that the presentation of exercises such as Hard Rock is being undermined by the Ministry of Defence.

During planning for Hard Rock, which was to have been held last September and October, the Ministry of Defence insisted on having a veto over the selection of proposed nuclear targets. The veto was used to define huge zones around military bases which the MoD ordered should not be subject to (theoretical) nuclear attack. The reason was not to hide the significance of the bases from the Soviet Union, but to avoid local inhabitants getting the idea that they were in the nuclear hot seat.

The MoD attitude reached a particularly ludicrous extreme in Scotland. Scottish civil defence officials had proposed that the Hard Rock targets include, as in previous exercises, the country's top nuclear target, the nuclear missile submarine bases at Faslane, and the Holy Loch, on the Clyde. The MoD disagreed, and ordered that a huge tract of Scottish countryside around the Clyde should also be exempt from attack. Astonished local staff complained that the nearest target allowed was 'half way across the Cairngorms'.

This report is borne out by the actual scenario used for the exercise (see *NS* 17 Sept. 1982). The Faslane bomb appears to have finished up on the fishing hamlet of Mallaig, 90 miles away. A bomb on Glasgow had to miss the city because of the nuclear target-free zone the MoD had demanded.

Duncan Campbell

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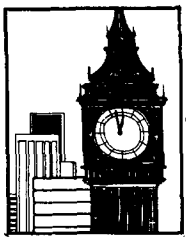

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Polls, and tactical voting can be good for you

DOUG HOYLE, the Labour MP who wants to ban opinion polls during the few days before an election, has good reason to distrust the press, which pays for most polls. When he fought and defeated Roy Jenkins at Warrington, in the first Parliamentary by-election contested by the SDP, he was mercilessly mocked by reporters, especially those from the right-wing tabloid papers.

One of Hoyle's claims during the campaign was that he would be a good constituency MP. This could have been checked. He had been MP for nearby Nelson and Colne from 1974 to 1979, when he lost the seat narrowly on a swing to the Conservatives very much smaller than the national average. Had reporters visited Hoyle's old seat during the Warrington campaign, they would have found Hoyle's claim well-justified. Instead they simply painted him – wrongly – as a closet Bennite.

So Hoyle knows what it is like to be at the sharp end of a rampant SDP election campaign aided and abetted by a biased press. When he says opinion polls are an unhealthy influence on voters, he should not be dismissed out of hand.

Hoyle's argument is essentially that polls disguise the 'real' issues in the final stages of an election campaign: instead of voting for the candidate whose party has the best policies, electors may be seduced by polls onto a bandwagon for a second-rate candidate who has little positive support but manages to accumulate enough tactical votes to secure victory.

Two separate issues need to be disentagled. The first concerns the propriety of providing information that encourages tactical voting; the second concerns the quality of that information.

Tactical voting has only become a major issue because of the prospect of three parties (counting the Liberal/SDP Alliance as a single 'party') contesting elections held under a first-past-the-post voting system. Where only two candidates contest a closely-fought seat, the winner needs 50 per cent of the votes. But where three candidates slog it out, the winning total may be as low as 34 per cent. Candidate A might be personally or politically detested by almost two-thirds of the voters: but if B's and C's votes are divided equally, A will win.

In such circumstances, election campaigns are bound to turn as much on the division of your opponents' support as on the size of your own. Hence Labour's concern in Darlington to prevent the Tory vote transferring to the SDP. Voting in Darlington does not take place until after this edition of the *New Statesman* goes to press: but in the days before polling it was the prospect of the Tory and SDP candidates vying for second place, and little tactical switching between them, that generated Labour's optimism that it would win the seat. But if, at the end, the Tory vote falls below 25 per cent, and the SDP candidate just manages to win, then Labour's worst fears of the effects of polls will be confirmed.

BUT IF THE FEARS are justified, the conclusion that flows from them – that polls should be banned – is not. Electors would simply have used our voting system to their own best ends. Naturally the Alliance is the most likely beneficiary of any tactical squeeze, as it is the natural second choice of many Labour *and* Conservative supporters. In the past our voting system has, to say the least, been none too kind to the Liberals. Defenders of that system have tended to shrug their shoulders and say little more than 'hard luck, but those are the rules of the game'. If tactical voting gives Alliance candidates a better chance in more seats, it is rum for their opponents to complain: those who live by first-past-the-post must be prepared to die by it.

Indeed, it can be argued that tactical voting actually enhances the legitimacy of the results of three-cornered contests. The more the third candidate's votes are squeezed, the greater the number of votes the winner needs for victory. If the third candidate obtains 32 per cent, victory goes to the candidate who can get 34 per cent. But if the third candidate's support collapses to 16 per cent, the victory target grows to 42 per cent. Any opinion poll that 'robs' a Labour or Tory candidate of victory by encouraging tactical switching to the Alliance does so by moving the winning post to nearer the 50 per cent mark. Conversely, any attempt to stifle tactical voting in a three-cornered contest has the practical effect of promoting the largest possible aggregate majority *against* the winner.

An accurate poll that assists tactical voting can therefore be held to enhance democracy. The issue, however, does not stop there. Consider the consequences of a campaign in which the share of support for each of three candidates a week before polling day is as follows: A 36 per cent, B 34 per cent, C 30 per cent. Here are three scenarios for what could happen:

1. No opinion poll figures are published, and no net change of support takes place. A wins.
2. A poll appears showing C in third place. Some of C's support switches tactically to B. B wins.
3. Alternatively, a less accurate poll puts C in second place, and B in third place. B's vote is then squeezed, and C wins.

It is clear that the result of such a contrast can be influenced (a) by whether polls are conducted (and sufficiently before polling day to allow tactical switching to occur), and (b) by the quality of the poll(s). NOP's rogue poll at the beginning of the Darlington by-election (see *NS* 4 March) illustrates that polling quality can vary.

So what is to be done? Banning polls, apart from being wrong in principle – by denying information that helps voters decide their actions – could well achieve the opposite effect from that intended by Doug Hoyle and his co-thinkers. In the example above, victory could well depend on which candidate could best persuade voters which of the *other* candidates was out of the race. Instead of opinion polls, we would have spurious claims based on canvass returns, the anecdotal observations of visiting journalists – not all of whom can be trusted to be impartial – and the varying odds offered by Messrs William Hill and Ladbrokes. Far better, surely, to let voters make tactical decisions with their eyes open than with their eyes shut, and encourage the dissemination of figures from competing pollsters. If a polling reform is needed, it is to encourage pollsters to agree on their methods of sample-design. (The biggest source of polling error, especially in by-elections, is deficient sampling methods.)

There is another reform that could be considered. It has nothing to do with polls, yet could do away with all, or nearly all, tactical voting. We could introduce the Alternative Vote. This would allow electors to place candidates in order of preference; the least popular candidates would be eliminated in turn until one has a majority of the total votes cast.

That reform would take the guesswork out of who was being squeezed, and prevent voters from deserting their preferred candidate unnecessarily. In our present system, after all, tactical voting is little more than spontaneous, ad hoc electoral reform along AV lines. The trouble is that it is messy, unpredictable, and liable to be distorted, not by polls as such, but by poor polls and other misleading information. It would, perhaps, be better to make it official – just as, if Labour's Ossie O'Brien wins in Darlington, it would be better if he wins with a large vote garnered from people who like him, rather than with a small vote which gives him victory solely because the opposition to him happens to be equally divided. □

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Spoiling for a fight

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has voted to release a memorandum from General Edward Rowny, calling for a purge of the US disarmament delegation. Claudia Wright reports on his career

Washington

ON THE SURFACE, General Edward Rowny, the US special representative for arms control and disarmament negotiations, head of the US Strategic Arms Reduction (START) delegation in Geneva, is one of the most experienced negotiators that the US has. Appointed to the SALT-II delegation in 1973, after almost a decade of NATO commands in Europe, Rowny was the representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff throughout the ill-fated SALT process.

But Rowny has never been serious about negotiating arms control with the Russians. His record in the SALT-II talks and his two years in charge of the START delegation reveal a man who wants to enlarge every US military advantage and reduce the Soviet ability to respond; who thinks that going to the brink with the Russians is the only way to get them to sign agreements that concede their strategic inferiority. The record of Rowny's career, and the recollections of US officials who have dealt with him, also reveal a man who ignores his superiors' instructions, plots against his colleagues and has sabotaged every move that the Americans have made to reach a genuine agreement on strategic arms control.

Rowny is a professional spoiler – a man whose career has been advanced against opponents in four Presidential Administrations by one of the most extraordinary cabals in recent Washington history. That cabal is run by Richard Perle, a former assistant to Senator Henry Jackson, a powerful Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Perle is now Assistant Secretary of Defense for international security policy. He is Rowny's controller. He also dictates to the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, George Shultz, and the President himself exactly what US strategic arms policy will be. Perle's cabal, nicknamed 'Cromwell's Chaplains', is responsible for the refusal of the US to negotiate seriously with the Russians at Geneva.

Rowny was never the choice of the Joint Chiefs as their representative in strategic arms talks. In 1973, the Chiefs nominated a navy admiral, but Rowny and his friends, Perle and Jackson, were able to get the Nixon White House to put Rowny in as a substitute. By the time that the Carter Administration took SALT-II over in 1977, Rowny had passed the army's mandatory retirement age. Neither the White House nor the new Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, wanted to keep him on the SALT delegation. But again Perle and Jackson, brandishing the threat of Jackson's vote against an arms agreement, prevailed. Rowny's appointment was extended each year, although he was told that he would have to retire when the SALT agreement was signed in June 1979.

ROWNY HAS CLAIMED that he resigned from the SALT delegation and the army in protest against the terms of the treaty, whose ratification he publicly went on to oppose. According to US officials on the SALT delegation, Rowny privately begged the Pentagon to extend his service once more. He was refused. Rowny didn't jump off the SALT delegation – he was pushed. The reason was not only that he was known to oppose the terms of the treaty. US officials on the delegation recall that he had openly worked against them from the beginning. They say he was in constant communication with Perle in Washington. 'He always let us know he was keeping memoranda on us,' one official remembers. 'He made no secret of the fact.' This is a technique that Rowny has repeated recently.

After he left the army, Rowny took a research appointment. He planned to write a comparative study of US and Soviet negotiating tactics. One reader describes the draft papers as 'drivel'. Another says that Rowny wrote that it was impossible to negotiate with the Russians because of the 'Mongol influence'. The Russians, he claimed, were descended from the Mongols and respected nothing but brute force. They would never negotiate an arms-control agreement unless compelled to by confrontation with US military superiority.

Rowny was nominated as the START negotiator on 30 April 1981. He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he had been in favour of the March '77 'comprehensive proposal' because it involved radical arms reductions. He said he regretted that 'we did not have the willpower to stick by that proposed agreement'. This was intentionally misleading. Rowny was opposed, just as Perle and Jackson were opposed at the time, to any agreement that limited the weapons in which the US had a clear superiority over the USSR – cruise missiles, mobile ICBMs (the MX system), the new B1 bomber. They favoured the March '77 proposal because it ignored the areas of American advantage and concentrated on reducing the heavy land-based Soviet missiles which the US had decided against matching. The proposal was far too one-sided to have any chance of acceptance by the Soviets. Paul Warnke, chief of the SALT-II delegation, says: 'I've never known what (Rowny) was prepared to give up for an agreement.'

The Senate approved Rowny's START appointment with misgivings. Senate staff were concerned that he might try to sabotage the then director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Eugene Rostow, just as he has sabotaged Warnke before.

What the Senate apparently did not know was that Rowny had originally been offered, or thought that he had been offered, the Director's post, and that this had been withdrawn at the last minute. Rowny became the number three man at ACDA, blaming Rostow for stealing his job.

DURING THE SALT-II period, according to Warnke, Rowny was only a 'minor nuisance' because Warnke, not Rowny, had the support of the Secretary of Defense, as well as that of the White House. At the opening of the START negotiations, Rowny's tactical position was far stronger. Perle had taken over at the Pentagon and, according to US officials, played 'Svengali to Weinberger'. Perle also influenced the National Security Council staff through a former Senate aide and friend of the Rowny family, Sven Kraemer (see *NS* 13 March 1981). Kraemer and Perle had been members of an earlier cabal, 'The Madison Group', named after the Washington Hotel where they met for lunch. The group included 13 staff aides from the offices of conservative Senators and Congressmen, and dominated the Reagan transition planning for the Defense and State Departments, ACDA and the NSC, putting themselves in for high-level jobs in these agencies.

In Geneva, Perle had his own man on Rowny's delegation, Michael Mobbs – a former tax lawyer. Rowny's personal aide, army colonel Sam Watson, stayed in Washington for much of the talks, where he remained in close touch with Perle. Watson is known at the Pentagon as Rowny's 'horse holder' and, at the State Department, as 'Slippery Sam'.

Rowny's and Watson's first move was to prevent Rostow establishing effective control of his own agency. They were able to recruit Senate support to block Rostow's nominations for deputy director of ACDA, and for the Assistant Director in charge of nuclear and weapons control. But they were really after the big fish – Rostow himself. The idea was to replace him with a man who could be more easily controlled.

Unaware of exactly what was going on,

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Rostow asked Secretary of State Shultz for a meeting on 12 January, to discuss how far the Administration would go to reach an agreement with the Russians on the intermediate-range nuclear forces – the cruise, Pershing-II and SS20 missiles. Rostow went into Shultz's office and was fired. The White House had already picked his replacement – Kenneth Adelman, the 36-year old deputy to Jeane Kirkpatrick, the US Representative at the United Nations.

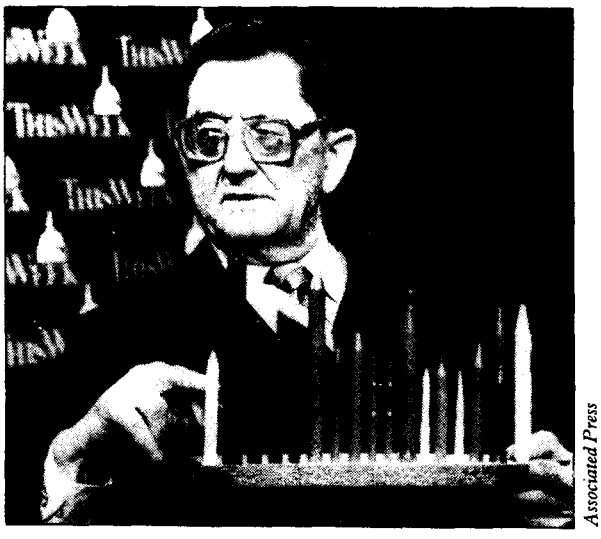
Within days, Rowny told his horse holder Watson to draft a memorandum for Adelman. This made plain that Rowny had no intention of taking orders from the new director. He would have the right, he told Adelman, to run the Geneva delegation as he saw fit, and would report directly to the White House over Adelman's head. This suggested that Senator Gary Hart, a supporter of the nuclear freeze resolution and Democratic candidate for President, should be excluded from the Geneva delegation.

IN THE FLUSH of their victory over Rostow, Rowny and Watson overdid it. Washington-based officials tipped off their colleagues in Geneva. One of the delegation members confronted Rowny about the memorandum. Rowny denied that it existed.

In Washington, the rumours reached Senate staff who were preparing for Adelman's nomination hearing, and Adelman was alerted. He had already sent a copy of the memorandum to Robinson West, an assistant secretary in the Interior Department.

housecleaning'. He replied, 'No, there is not going to be a housecleaning . . . I have heard the rumour and it came as a very big surprise to me . . . That is the furthest thing from my mind . . . I have always had very high esteem for the people in ACDA and I have never heard the Secretary of State or the President or anybody in the personnel office, in the White House, or anybody talk in those terms.'

Adelman was lying, but, at the time, the Senators were more concerned with other lapses – a report that Adelman had written in April 1981 implying support for South Africa's effort to acquire nuclear weapons; vagueness about whether he thought the US could wage 'limited nuclear war' or could 'prevail' if it did; finally, his denial of having told a journalist that arms negotiations with



Associated Press

Popper foto

With friends like these . . . (from left to right) Richard Perle, Edward Rowny (playing with his models) and Kenneth Adelman

put in writing what Rowny had attempted, but failed to achieve, with Rostow.

Rostow's hostility towards the SALT-II agreement is well known. Like Rowny and Perle, he had no intention of offering to limit any of the American weapons that were ahead of Soviet capabilities – the B1 and 'stealth' bombers, the Trident-II submarine missile, the air to sea-launched cruise missiles. Rostow didn't expect the Russians to agree to any offer the US would make. His aim, officials say, was to 'put the monkey on the Russians' back' – to make it appear, particularly in Europe, that the US was serious about negotiations, but that it was the Russians who were responsible for the lack of agreement.

Rowny and Perle refused to go even that far. With Rostow out of the way, they decided to make sure there would be no one left on the START delegation or in ACDA in Washington who might push for a serious offer. Rowny's mid-January memorandum for Adelman not only laid down who would be boss, it advised Adelman that he should remove most of the Geneva delegation members. The civilian representatives from ACDA and the State Department were termed soft, wanting 'progress at any price'. Rear Admiral William Williams, the Joint Chiefs' representative, was described as lacking intelligence. ACDA officials in Washington were also criticised. Rowny

West and Adelman had been friends at the Pentagon in the Ford Administration. West, ACDA sources say, is a hatchet man – Adelman asked him to prepare a purge along the lines recommended by Rowny. West told the *New Statesman* that the Rowny document has a 'dazzling simplicity that makes good sense and doesn't hurt anybody'. He says that Adelman 'isn't going to be anyone's patsy' and blames the Senate for the controversy. Conservatives close to Perle urged Adelman to purge ACDA to make jobs for themselves. One of these advisors, Michael Pillsbury, a Senate Republican staff assistant and member of the old 'Madison Group', has pursued a personal vendetta against officials in ACDA and the State Department, whom he blames for humiliating him during the transition in early 1981, and blocking his appointment as deputy director of ACDA.

Adelman consulted other officials about what he should say if he was asked about the Rowney hit list during his nomination hearing. A source says that he heard Adelman being told, in conversation, not to deny that he had read the Rowny memorandum. He was advised to say that he had read it but would not act on it.

Adelman was much too afraid of Rowny to take this advice, and at his second appearance before the Senate, on 3 February, he was asked whether there was going to be 'a

the Soviets were a 'sham'.

On 24 February, the Foreign Relations Committee voted nine to eight to reject Adelman's nomination. President Reagan then promised a battle to save Adelman, and the Republican leadership stalled for time to rally support. Then, on 11 March, following the first press reports about the memorandum, Rowney told the press that the document had been prepared for him by assistants and consisted only of 'talking points' that 'do not represent my views then or now'. The Deputy Secretary of State, Kenneth Dam, was summond to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he promised to hand over the Rowny document. Secretary Shultz told the press that questions about the document were 'beside the point', because Rowny had said that it did not represent his views. Shultz was covering Rowny's lie.

WHAT ROWNY HADN'T said was just as revealing as what had been written. One member of the delegation whom Rowny had not attacked was Michael Mobbs, Perle's representative. But within days of handing the memorandum to Adelman, a bitter fight occurred between Rowny and Mobbs. According to officials in Geneva and Washington, Rowny had been instructed to prepare and table a written document embodying the US negotiating offer on strategic

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missiles. This had been Rostow's position, and it was supported by the entire delegation – except for Mobbs, who quarrelled over the language. He was representing Perle's opposition. Perle suspected that even if the document made no concessions to the Soviets and they rejected it, it might lead to pressure for a genuine agreement, with concessions on the US side as well. That was the position that the Administration was being urged, by the European allies, to take on the cruise and Pershing-II missiles. Perle wanted to avoid comparable pressure on START.

Rowny told Mobbs he was going to prepare the draft and that, if he didn't like it, he could tell Perle whatever he wanted. Mobbs replied that, if Rowny went ahead, his instructions were to walk out of the delegation. Perle was able to block the move.

Once the Rowny memorandum leaked, however, events began to move beyond Perle's control. The danger is not just that Adelman has been caught lying to the Senate, or that Rowny too has been exposed. The evidence is in the open that he and Perle had put up the Adelman nomination to prevent the START negotiations getting anywhere. The big lie is coming out – exposure of the puppet is threatening the puppeteers, and unmasking the entire charade in Geneva.

THE ADMINISTRATION is desperate to buy time. The Geneva talks – both START and the intermediate range missile talks – go into recess at the end of March. Adelman's nomination is scheduled for a Senate vote a week later. Perle and the White House had hoped to create the impression of seriousness, without any new offers, until the talks resumed in June, much closer to the first cruise missile deployment.

The Rowny affair has wrecked this strategy and split the Perle cabal itself, over whether to sacrifice Adelman for Rowny, or Rowny for Adelman. Adelman's backers are encouraging the Senate to focus on Rowny, who may be called to testify. Senator Hart has already called for his resignation. Other Senate opponents of the Administration's nuclear policies aren't sure whether to limit themselves to one corpse, or, instead, go for two.

The Administration is spinning out of control as badly as during the Lebanon war, when similar personal vendettas and spleen resulted in General Haig's sacking. The Democratic Presidential candidates sense a major campaign issue – the Republicans are apprehensive that whatever compromise proposals they offer in Geneva, the Kremlin, which is bound to prefer a Democratic victory next year, will manoeuvre to undermine Mr Reagan with the US electorate. A recent poll shows that 51 per cent of Americans say that the President is creating an arms race. The same percentage say that they disagree, that 'he will keep us out of war'. (These figures may be less than logical, but are, in fact, correct.) The nuclear freeze forces have a majority in the House and the public support that they need to attack Reagan and the Perle cabal for being deceitful and dangerous. □

HEALTH

Private gain

Dorothy Wade and Justine Picardie report on an American invasion

RIDING in on the tide of Tory enthusiasm for the private health sector have come the American health corporations. They are quietly and busily buying and building hospitals all over Britain which treat not only acute surgical cases but also, more recently, psychiatric illness.

British ill health (or simply the desire for luxurious medical attention) is regarded as having great potential for American companies which are interested in equity investment and long-term development. According to the 1983 Directory of the Federation of US hospitals and Association of Investor Owned Hospitals, 'opportunities are especially bright in the countries with ailing health systems such as England. British government support for private sector hospital build-up has been especially encouraging for the US companies operating there.' That support has been demonstrated by several Tory Ministers who have quashed local authority objections to private hospitals in their area.

Four major American health corporations – American Medical International, Hospital Corporaton of America, Humana and Community Psychiatric Centres – now own 15 hospitals in Britain with 1,296 beds. Another seven hospitals with 497 beds are under construction, giving these companies nearly half the total number of beds in private hospitals.

This mushrooming of private hospitals has followed a shift in Tory policy on private health care. During the 1970s, Tory commitment to pay-beds in NHS hospitals actually limited the opportunities for private medical companies. As a consequence, BUPA produced a report pointing out that Labour's policy of driving private care out of the public sector was in fact more beneficial for private companies. Since then, Tories have shifted tack. In 1980, they dismantled the Health Services Board which could prevent a private hospital being built if it competed with the NHS for scarce staff resources. (One feature of private hospitals is that they are not tied to a national wage agreement; they pay less in low-wage areas, and more where labour is expensive.) Now only hospitals with 120 beds or more have to seek authorisation from a health authority. Since 1980, private companies have only planned hospitals with less than 120 beds.

The latest money-spinner is psychiatric treatment, including rehabilitation for drug and alcohol addicts. Two of America's largest operators of psychiatric hospitals, Community Psychiatric Centres (CPC) and Charter Medical, are expanding in Britain. CPC is opening a 56-bed psychiatric hospital in Hayes, Kent this autumn, while Charter is planning an 88-bed hospital in London. CPC, which runs 20 psychiatric hospitals in the US, also bought two British hospitals in May 1980 for £5 million, the Priory in Roehampton and Galsworthy House in Kingston.

Dr Desmond Kelly, Medical Director of the Priory, said: 'We can offer a model of what we think is the best possible psychiatric care in the country.' But, at prices ranging from £95 to £125 a day, it is a model from which very few can derive an advantage. According to hospital administrator David Wakefield, one benefit of their care is that 'some of the old ladies have had staff all their lives; it's very good therapy for them to learn how to cook.'

Charter Medical, with 35 hospitals in America, already has two London clinics treating drug and alcohol addiction, and psychiatric illnesses, including anorexia and bulimia nervosa (compulsive under-eating and over-eating followed by self-induced vomiting). Their Chelsea clinic has 45 beds, and their new Hampstead clinic has 33. In January they were charging £145 a day, but now offer a bed in a shared room for £95 a day. They plan to treat a wider range of conditions when they open their new London hospital.

Mr Charles Vetter, the head of Accept – a voluntary organisation to help alcoholics – helped to draw up Charter's initial treatment programme. But he has now withdrawn from any involvement with them. 'Medicine should not be a profit-making concern. There's no question about it, Charter are very expensive. Accept have 24,000 client attendance days a year, so if we were charging £95 a day we'd all be in the Bahamas. But we prefer to run an NHS-backed free service.'

OTHER AMERICAN companies have no time for such scruples. The director of Finance and Administration for Hospital Corporation of America, the world's largest hospital corporation, told the *New Statesman:* 'We are a profit-making concern and we're not ashamed to admit it.' HCA sees overseas expansion as a means of safeguarding those profits. 'Part of the reason for HCA's move into foreign investment . . . is that lower taxes are levied on foreign investment', said Robert Crosby, President of HCA's subsidiary, in 1981. 'HCA is now using the

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international market as a research and development programme . . . if we need to broaden our expansion base in large numbers, at least we will know if there is an opportunity to invest in really big dollars.'

Although HCA owns or manages 350 hospitals, its move into Britain was cautious. They kept a small office in London for six years in order, they said, just to co-ordinate their Middle East activities. But suddenly at the end of 1982 they bought a chain of six small hospitals for £14 million from a company called Seltahart Holdings. The hospitals are in Farnham, Leeds, Solihull, Blackpool, Southend and Brentwood.

They are now building a 100-bed hospital in Southampton, having defeated strong objections from the local authorities. They also hope to build a 76-bed, £7 million hospital at Ravelston Quay, Edinburgh, if they win their appeal against Edinburgh District Council's opposition. Last November, Scottish Secretary George Younger overturned, in an unusually speedy three months, the objections of Glasgow District Council to the 102-bed Ross Hall hospital, financed by American Medical International. He is likely to do the same for HCA.

American Medical International owns, manages and is developing more than 110 hospitals worldwide. In Britain they began by buying the Harley Street Clinic in 1970, and now own eight, manage St Anthony's in Cheam, and are building Ross Hall Hospital. AMI's managing director, Gene Burleson, is optimistic about his company's future in Britain. 'The cuts in the NHS create a demand for private care,' he said. AMI plan to go on building new hospitals here for the next five years.

LABOUR OPPOSITION is predictable. But when Tory Westminster Council objected to the expansion of the Harley Street Clinic, it too was over-ruled by the Environment Secretary. More help came from Sir George Young when, as Minister at the DHSS, he authorised a letter to London health authorities 'letting them know' of the services at the new Wellington Day Surgery Centre.

While councils are unsuccessfully opposing private hospitals, a large number of Britain's doctors are enthusiastic supporters of private health care. In three of AMI's British hospitals, doctors have minority shareholdings in the holding companies. Consultants have a 10 per cent shareholding in three of HCA's hospitals. Although the hospital company directors proclaim their independence from the NHS, AMI director John Cassell said the consultants 'make the best use of available NHS facilities for their patients'. AMI has, for instance, radio therapy facilities of its own while HCA uses NHS pathology services, and operating theatre equipment. As Norman Fowler told the Bow Group in February: 'What Britain needs in the 1980s is a developing partnership between all those involved in the provision of care whether in the public sector or the private. This vital principle of partnership in care underlies the approach which combines economic realism with common sense.' □

TUC

Seating plans

Francis Beckett reports on General Council membership

IN THE BLUE CORNER, David Basnett, General Secretary of the General Municipal and Boilermakers Trade Union, known to be a cunning infighter; in the red corner, weighing in with almost twice as many members, the Transport and General Workers' rough tough Executive Officer, former London bus driver Larry Smith. The fisticuffs were over future representation on the TUC General Council, and took place among the *present* General Council this Wednesday, 23 March.

Larry Smith had lost the last two bouts, at the Trades Union Congress in Blackpool in 1981, and in Brighton in 1982, but was buoyant about his chances this time. They were playing before a smaller house but that hadn't inhibited the pre-fight verbals. Larry Smith had accused his opponents, in one of his union's newspapers, of using the techniques of Dr Goebbels.

In the event the T&G lost again narrowly on Wednesday. But Basnett's victory is still not final.

The new system of electing the TUC General Council (chosen by the Congress last year) will be used for the first time at this year's Congress in September. Unions with over 100,000 members will get two automatic seats, those with more than 500,000, two seats; those with more than 750,000, three seats; those with more than a million, four seats; and those with more than 1½ million, five seats. Unions with less than 100,000 members will get 11 seats between them and will ballot for them among themselves. There will be six women's seats elected by the whole Congress, giving a total of 54 seats.

Up to now, the 43-member General Council has been elected by the whole Congress. It has voted for members in eighteen groups, divided in a rough and ready way, into areas of employment. The whole of Congress votes in each group, so, for example, the shopworkers (437,864 members) have considerably more say in who represents railway workers than Aslef (26,219 members).

The new system was proposed by Brian Stanley of the Post Office Engineering Union (132,828 members; present General Council members, none; General Council members under the new system, one) and opposed by Moss Evans, who, since, has allowed Larry Smith to bear the standard on the issue for the TGWU (membership 1,817,970; present General Council members six; General Council members under the new system, five – both excluding members in the women's section).

That left the TGWU with a problem. It had just taken in two smaller unions – the farmworkers and the dyers and bleachers – both of which, as independent unions, had managed to hang onto General Council seats. They wanted to keep them and, in merger negotiations, Larry Smith promised TGWU help to do so. So in 1982 their respective leaders, Jack Boddy and Eddie Haigh, stood in separate groups from the four mainstream TGWU candidates and, with TGWU support, were elected, bringing the TGWU total to six General Council members. Under the new system, keeping them both on the General Council would require one of the four mainstream TGWU representatives to stand down. They would be unlikely to do so – though, if it came to it, the honour of making the sacrifice might well fall to Larry Smith himself. The TGWU therefore decided that it would affiliate its two new trade groups separately. This was the basis of Wednesday's confrontation.

THE PRINCIPLE OF separate affiliations is not new: ASTMS has been doing it for years with its Medical Practitioners Section. But David Basnett's GMB had also recently taken over a union, the boilermakers, and did not want to affiliate it separately – paradoxically, because (unlike the farmworkers, dyers and bleachers and medical practitioners) the boilermakers reach the magical 100,000 members, which under the new system, would entitle them to a General Council seat if they were affiliated separately. The TGWU would not get automatic seats for Mr Boddy and Mr Haigh. Given many of the smaller unions' resentment of the TGWU's voting strength at Congress,

Memorial Meeting

A meeting to honour the memory of **Arthur and Cynthia Koestler** will take place at 6.30 pm on Thursday, 7 April, at the Royal Academy, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1, by kind invitation of Sir Hugh Casson, PRA, who will take the chair.

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their chances of being elected by the smaller unions in the under 100,000-strong unions' section would be slim, though Mr Boddy's personal popularity might just see him through. The move would, however, ensure that neither of them were in contention for any of the TGWU's five seats.

The General Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee says that, to be separately affiliated, a section must be independently capable of fulfilling the TUC's rules – as are the four sections of the AUEW, which are practically independent unions.

But, when it comes down to it, this is not a rule-book argument. The GMB side has become identified with the right wing and the TGWU side with the left wing, and people like Frank Chapple and Terry Duffy vote with their traditional allies. In reality, there is no reason to suppose that the new system will produce a more right-wing General Council, and some grounds for supposing it will strengthen the left; but that is another story.

Messrs Boddy and Haigh stand a better chance of a General Council seat without separate affiliation than with it. Nonetheless, they see separate affiliation as a way of helping them maintain a separate identity for their organisations within the TGWU.

General Council members from smaller unions, such as Ray Buckton (Aslef), Doug Grieve (tobacco workers), Ken Cameron (firemen) and Alan Sapper (television technicians), might well, under the old system, not have been elected without TGWU support. Yet now, TGWU proposals for separate affiliation might actually decrease their chances of re-election, for it would increase the competition for the smaller unions' eleven seats. Nonetheless, they hope that separate affiliation will help to pinpoint anomalies in the new system and pave the way for its abandonment.

The debate is only notionally about separate affiliation. The General Council is really debating the whole new system, yet again. The TGWU is accused of having used its patronage, under the old system, to choose which representatives of the smaller unions gained General Council representation. It denies it with uninhibited vigour. It is a sterile argument. If you possess twice as many votes as anyone else, you have patronage, whether you seek it or not, and it is practically unknown for a small union to get onto the General Council without TGWU support. Hardened Congress-watchers are used to the sight of nervous electoral hopefuls loitering outside the room where the TGWU is holding its pre-Congress delegation meeting.

The underlying accusation against the GMB is that it is trying to find a way to keep power in the hands of the right wing. It strenuously denies this, though it is no secret that it has not taken to some of the TGWU's successful candidates. The TGWU, however, has not always supported left-wing candidates. Despite this Wednesday's decision, the debate will be re-run again at Congress in September. □

MADAME BLAVATSKY

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TRAINING

Massaging employment

Youth training is way behind target. Carl James exposes an exercise in cynicism

IT IS NOW ADMITTED inside the Manpower Services Commission that the target of 460,000 places on the Youth Training Scheme is unreachable by this September without a dilution of the training standards that were originally hoped for.

Less than 200,000 places have so far been found, or are under negotiation. Saatchi and Saatchi have been hired to create a major advertising campaign to encourage employers to come forward and take part in the scheme. To date, they have not taken up their projected two-thirds of all places. The scheme offers them too little in financial incentives.

There are two ways for employers to take part – as managing agents responsible for delivering a complete training scheme; or as sponsors providing work experience, while another agency provides a minimum of 13 weeks training off the job. Sponsors get £1,850 a year per trainee. Out of this, they have to pay £25 a week in wages (£1,300 a year) and fees for off-the-job training. Managing agents receive an additional £100 per trainee. If employers take on three trainees, they can get an additional £1,850 for each of two young workers they would normally have taken on. Some employers are forming consortia to take advantage of this 'additionality'.

The apparently attractive package of one year's free labour for the cost of supervision, administration and organising some training, is not being taken up for two reasons. First, extra unskilled labour is of little use to employers without extra demand for their products. The government's deflationary economic policy is the first enemy of the New Training Initiative. Secondly, the actual extra costs of supervision, administration and training are, at best, barely covered by the £550 left after the trainee's wages have been paid. The government has just pressured Further Education Colleges to reduce their fees for 13-week courses from about £550 to £400 in an attempt to alleviate this problem.

The MSC's own pilot schemes have provided ample evidence that even employers benefitting from full additionality may not be covering their costs. About a dozen pilot schemes were set up last year. They received the £1,950 per trainee payable to joint managing agents and sponsors. They also received large sums for setting up their schemes. ICI, for example, in setting up a scheme for 50 young people, received £97,500 as managing agents and sponsors, as well as a grant of £92,000. Most other pilot schemes got similar grants and almost twice the amount per traineee as well will go to employers under the scheme proper. Two organisers of pilot schemes have admitted that they could not afford to reproduce the same format under the standard funding.

Further evidence of the minimal funding offered to employers comes from the costing of 'Mode B' training. Unlike Mode A, provided by employers, Mode B training will be organised and provided by local agents of the MSC, on special programmes which voluntary organisations and local authorities are expected to run. The average expected cost is £3,500 per trainee – again, almost double the amount paid to employers. Emphasis is on providing the cheaper Mode A training. Mode B is to be used in areas, such as the North East of England, where there are simply not enough employers to provide places for young people. It has also been tacitly accepted as a refuge for those least desired by employers.

AN EXAMINATION OF the original MSC figures reveals that, of an estimated 300,000 unemployed 16-year-olds in September 1983, a maximum of 150,000 places might be found with employers benefitting from 'additionality'. The remaining 150,000 would either have to find places with employers without this incentive, or in Mode B places. Both the deteriorating economic

THIS ENGLAND

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□ Luncheons – University College London. Professor W. E. Butler was the host at a luncheon held at University College London yesterday to mark the publication of three books on the Mongolian legal system. – *The Times* (Mrs V. A. Dunton)

□ British rail has agreed to change the spelling of Hanborough on their station signs and timetables – but not for 30 or 40 years. – *Oxford Star* (Rebecca Hall)

□ Gas board officials apoligised yesterday for inviting a dead woman to 'spend the winter in a tropical paradise for only £99'. The promotional literature was addressed to 'Mrs W. Denbow, Deceased' at Cockington, Torquay. Mrs Denbow died last June. – *Daily Telegraph* (Russell Holmes)

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situation and the reluctance of employers to come forward have made these figures unrealistic. The government may find itself having to pay for an expanded programme of Mode B training.

The desperate need to find places by September has implications for the quality of training in the 160,000 places so far found. No decisions regarding core learning objectives, or the assessment of standards, have yet been announced and it is believed that the former are still subject to debate inside the MSC. While even according to the timetable of October 1982, the deadline for the final setting of standards is December 1983 – three months *after* the scheme is scheduled to begin.

It has always been hoped to encompass the Easter school leavers within the Youth Training Scheme. To this end, a draft traineeship agreement has been prepared. However, an examination of the timetable for the implementation of YTS reveals this intention to be wishful thinking – the YTS development plan has always been geared to a September opening. For example, the scheme is to be run by area boards, each having an Accredited Training Centre responsible for staff training and development. Of 55 centres, the plan does not expect to identify the last 28 until July. The traineeship agreement that some trainees may receive after Easter is simply a sheet of paper with references to the handbook for the Scheme. This handbook is still in preparation.

The Development Plan is two months behind schedule. Notes of guidance to MSC field staff dealing with the fundamental elements of YTS schemes, and the criteria for assessing them, were due out in November 1982. They appeared in January 1983. Notes of guidance for employers as managing agents and sponsors were due to appear between November and January. They have not yet been seen.

The timetable has always been unrealistic. Since many crucial items could not be completed by September, they were allocated later dates. Standards will not be set until December 1983; the results of research into assessment and objectives will not be reported fully until 1984; schools will receive no career-guidance information until April 1984. All this is simply the result of the government's overriding need to massage the unemployment figures by half a million by September. The Youth Training Scheme was imposed from the top as a job creation scheme.

Access, as well as quality, is likely to be a victim of this expediency. The scheme specifies recruitment and selection procedures which eliminate bias in respect of disadvantaged groups – but no guidelines and no monitoring are proposed in this area. Norman Tebbit has gone on record as stating the applicability of race-relations legislation to entry to the scheme, but has made no commitments on its monitoring.

There is no evidence that any attempt will be made to eliminate sexual bias in recruitment. The pilot schemes have continued the usual sex-typing of employment. The ICI scheme for training young industrial workers has been laudable in other respects, but the trainees are all male.

The Manpower Services Commission was not allowed the time or resources to develop the lessons of the Youth Opportunities Programme. MSC staff and some employers and trade unionists have made great efforts to do this, and considerable numbers of young people will receive thoroughly competent training – but large numbers of school leavers will find themselves on schemes which have been taken on board to make up the numbers. They will be the victims of the cynical political expediency of a government which once declared itself only in favour of 'Real Jobs'. □

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CONSERVATISM

Boys will be boys – II

Raphael Samuel concludes his series of articles on the roots of Mrs Thatcher's brand of right-wing politics

DURING THE FIRST TWO centuries of the Conservative Party's existence, politics was a gentleman's sport and, like other aristocratic pastimes, it gave a privileged place to belligerence and the display of male prowess. The House of Commons, to follow the description of Tory Historian Sir Lewis Namier, was a 'socialized arena' for 'battle, drive and dominion'; a place for the acting out of hostilities within the limits of time-honoured rules; a licensed form of cock-fighting; a verbal equivalent to knightly swordplay. It was this atmosphere of sporting belligerence which seems to have captured the imagination of the young Winston Churchill and, in *My Early Life*, he gives it a characteristically romantic gloss. 'It seemed a very great world . . . a duelling ground where although the business might be ruthless and the weapons loaded with ball, there was ceremonious personal courtesy . . .'.

Politics was also an arena for sexual competition, a place where a 'public man' developed a peacock style. Sir Robert Peel, to judge by the way he posed for artists, cultivated a sense of himself as beautiful – Lawrence's well known portrait of him has a dandified hand on the hip. Benjamin Disraeli entered Parliament as a St James's exquisite, as much at home in the gambling saloons of Crockford's as in the committee rooms or lobbies of the House of Commons. He made his reputation as a Rupert of debate – like Lord Randolph Churchill in later years – and his relationship to 'Young England', the male fraternity which formed around him, reproduced something of that passionate intensity which had marked the friendships of his schoolboy years. His political novels are essentially male affairs, even though women figure in them, and, as later in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Brideshead Revisited*, there is a definitely erotic thrust to the descriptions of young aristocrats.

Conservatism has always fed on male companionships. It originated in such masculine settings as the hunting field and the High Table, and was subsequently sustained in a whole series of exclusively male preserves – the Inns of Court, the House of Commons, the magistrates bench, the episcopal palace. One could refer to the gentlemen's clubs of the metropolis where, in the 1830s, the system of Party whips originated; or to those Conservative and Constitutional Clubs 'greatly used during the day by professional and business men' which became the heart of party organisation in the provincial constituencies. Or one might consider the armed services, whose officer class has been a major source of recruitment for parliamentary back-benchers and constituency party chairmen. Space might also be given to more recent (if unofficial) constituents of the Conservative cause, such as the Inner Wheel and the Rotarians; the Masonic Lodge; the British Legion and the golf club. Above all, attention would need to be paid to that citadel of male prerogative – where women were, until very recently, unknown – the City of London.

The atmosphere of masculine exclusiveness is nowhere more apparent than in that great seminary of Conservative politicians, the Victorian public school. It can be seen not only in the enormous amount of importance attached to organised games, 'a kind of legalised toughness', and the association of 'manly pastimes' with moral virtue – in school sermons, a favourite preacher's trick was to emphasise the close connection between 'virtus' (virtue) and 'vir' (man) – but also in the symbolic importance attached to Classics, an exclusively male form of learning. (Readers of *The Mill on the Floss* will recall Tom's sovereign contempt for Maggie Tulliver because girls were 'too silly' to learn Latin.)

IN ALL THESE INSTITUTIONS, women were constituted as the threatening 'other'. Thus the metropolitan club served not only to provide a gentleman's residence for young unmarried men, but also served as a bachelor escape for the married. 'A club', wrote G. A. Sala, 'is a weapon used by savages to keep white women at a distance.' The public schools were deliberately designed to abstract boys from the softening influence of women (not only mothers, but, even more, the servants). In the army, marriage was discouraged in the officer class; wives, after the Crimean war, were no longer allowed to accompany their husbands on active service and the officers' mess was maintained as a bachelor establishment – in British India, as late as the 1920s, the only occasion when wives were allowed to visit was on New Year's Eve.

In the metropolitan clubs – the heartland, as Brian Harrison has shown, of organised opposition to women's suffrage – not only the members but the great majority of the servants were male, from the dignified secretary ('generally a military or naval officer of some rank') down to the page boys and runners (a staff of housemaids performed their work invisibly, 'often at 5 a.m. in the morning', while the members were still safely asleep). Much the same was true in the ancient universities, where the gentlemen-commoners and scholars were served by men and boys – 'Scouts' in Oxford, 'Bedders' in Cambridge; in the bachelor establishments of the colonies ('chummeries' as they were called in British India) where young unmarried men set up house together; and in the public schools, where, under the fagging system, many of the menial tasks were performed by junior boys – 'warming beds by lying on them' was a 'normal chore'. Similarly, the army officer was serviced by his batman, the naval commander by his steward, the vicar by his curate and his choirboys, the senior civil servant by a male secretary and the politician by a 'gentleman's gentleman'. Among the services of Bonar Law's private secretary were loading his pipe with tobacco, and making sure there was a glass of milk and a slice of gingerbread for him when he went to bed.

All these institutions depended, for their *esprit de corps*, on the unspoken premises of male bonding. This can be seen in its simplest and most easily recognisable form in the closed circle of initiates, like the group of boys from Number Five study in Kipling's *Stalky & Co*; or the fellowship of the naval wardroom and the officers' mess. The 'old boy network', where shared regimental or school loyalties effaced worldly differences, can be seen as an attenuated version of the same phenomenon. Very different, and perhaps more distinctively Tory in character, were those more hierarchical relations where age made a protégé of youth, or masters patronised servants. One could refer here to the 'small friend' system in the public schools, which housemasters sought so vainly to stamp out, those romantic friendships where (as *Tom Brown's Schooldays* tells us) 'pretty white-handed curly-headed boys' were 'petted and pampered by some of the big fellows, who . . . did all they could to spoil them for . . . this world and the next'. A third and more open form of male bonding, enormously important in politics, was that between leaders and followers – one could instance Disraeli and 'Young England', Milner and his 'kindergarten' (the young men who served him in South Africa), or, in the British army of the late 19th century, the rival 'Rings' which grew up around Wolseley and Field Marshal Roberts. The sexual potential in these relationships was, in the 19th century, largely unrecognised and denied an erotic release; while the relationships themselves were legitimated in the name of service, duty or art, as in those 'hellenic friendships' which were such a feature of the ancient universities. (The regressive dialectics of

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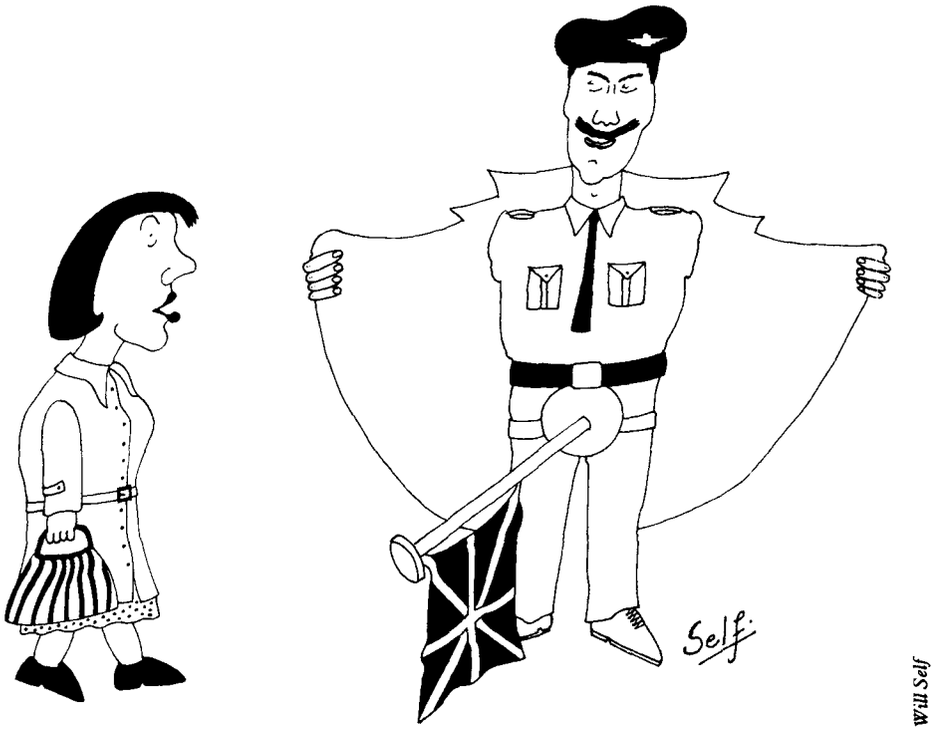

Will Self

this relationship are brilliantly discussed in Richard Jenkyns' *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*.)

THE ANTI-FEMINISM of the Conservative Party – the subject of part 1 of this article (*NS* 18 March) – may thus be said to have its roots in a whole complex of group and institutional loyalties. It breathes, like *Private Eye*, the spirit of the schoolboy locker room; it reproduces, as in the continuing outpourings of Paul Johnson (the *Spectator* of 18 March 1983 carries another whole page of his, directed against Greenham Common), the moral panics of a gentleman's club. Its misogynist strain might be traced in part to those various incarnations of right-wing homosexuality, sublimated or repressed, which have played such an important, if unacknowledged part, in the making of Conservative culture. (Both the 'Eton Boating Song' and 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen', to which Conservatives are presumably sentimentally attached, were written by that much-despised genus of their fellow-countrymen, 'queers' – half the Empire, it seems, was won by them.)

The salience of single sex institutions in the unofficial culture of Conservatism must put in question the Party's continually reaffirmed commitment to the sanctity of family life. Despite the Party's proclaimed enthusiasm for domesticity (Mrs Thatcher, to follow her interviews in the women's press, is never happier than when wheeling a wire trolley at the local Safeways), Tory parents, if they have any money at all, send their children away from home at the earliest possible age (eight, if they go to prep school); while the wealthier among them (like the Thatchers) consign the care of their toddlers to nannies. Nor is the Tory male, whatever his professed beliefs, in any simple sense uxorious. In the old days he would delay marriage to middle age (readers may be familiar with *Punch*'s advice to those intending to be married . . .'Don't') and, even when he does marry, he has normally taken good care to maintain a bachelor identity outside the home – attending dinner-jacketed public occasions, old boy reunions or business functions; travelling abroad; visiting clients; staying late at the office; getting stuck in traffic jams; doing a spell with the Territorial Army.

From the point of view of gender-relations, Conservatism could be said to be an ideology that has glorified the male. It is perhaps indicative of this that Labour, notwithstanding its original base in male trade unionism, has won its basic constituency of support on what are in some sort 'women's' issues (i.e. welfare), while Conservatism, as recent events may remind us, comes into its own on those of war. With the exception of the now-decayed Primrose League (that strange experiment in middle-class ritualism where 'dames' enjoyed an equal prestige to 'knights'), the Party caucuses have been overwhelmingly male in character. The Party's fantasy life is dominated by men, too, with swashbuckling male heroes (in the old days frontier officers; nowadays secret agents) and, insofar as it allows romantic interest, the erotic interest is apt to focus on men. (The male-fixated Baroness Orczy is very much of a piece in this with Ian Fleming and Benjamin Disraeli.)

THE ARRIVAL OF a woman in the leadership of the Party, so far from weakening its masculine bias, seems, if anything, to have strengthened it. All her real enthusiasms seem to go to men. As a child, her publicly-recorded memories focus almost exclusively on her father. At Oxford, she flourished in the overwhelmingly male OUCA (Oxford University Conservative Association), whereas she seems to have been uneasily placed with her tutors and fellow students at Somerville (an all-women's College). She has surrounded herself with men in her Cabinet. In traditional middle-class terms, her predilections seem to be for 'hearties' rather than 'aesthetes'. Her husband is a businessman, an ex-rugger player and army major rather than a university graduate. Her campaign manager in the contest for the Conservative leadership was a Colditz escapee. The public service which seems to give her the highest pleasure is the army. She clearly delights in posing for photographs with soldiers – firing a canon in the Falklands; climbing in and out of tanks in Northern Ireland – and she is exhibited in the public prints seated in the cockpit of a Harrier rather as the Iron Duke – her 19th century forebear – would have chosen to appear on horseback. She has shown real enthusiasm for paramilitary interventions in domestic affairs, sending the SAS into the Iranian embassy and recommending rubber bullets and water cannon for the youth of Toxteth. And the enormous popularity which she now enjoys with the Party 'bloods' (even those aesthetes who find her economic policy too 'liberal') is because she has had the 'guts' to wage war.

Mrs Thatcher has presented herself from the start as a warrior rather than a healer. She came to the leadership pledged to shake Britain free of what she called 'a prolonged course of sedation' (*Let Our Children Grow Tall*, p.47). One of her earlier utopian dreams was of building 'squadrons of fighter planes' (*ibid*). More recently she has raised her sights to Tridents. She reserves her greatest scorn for the 'waverers' and 'faint-hearts' in her own ranks, and is never happier than when castigating her Labour (or Liberal) opponents for being 'cissie'. She loves striking aggressive attitudes whether it is to attack 'outmoded' trade union practices, or new-fangled progressive ideas. She takes a robust, no-nonsense view of hanging.

Her simple moral maxims seem to owe much to Scout Law and, like Baden-Powell, she is worried that 'grandmotherly' legislation has been destroying the national character. 'Free feeding and old age pensions, strike pay, cheap beer and indiscriminate charity,' wrote the founder of the Scout movement, 'do not make for the hardening of the nation or the building up of a self-reliant, energetic manhood'.

It is part of the success of Mrs Thatcher, as Stuart Hall argued as long ago as 1979, that she has been able to shift the whole terrain of British politics rightwards. The same might be argued in terms of gender divisions. Unarticulated notions of masculinity could be said to underpin both the economic policy of the government – with its hallucinogenic notion of present-day Britain as a nation of rugged individualists – and its hostility to education and welfare, or its preference, whether in the field of penal policy or unemployment, for therapeutic shocks. The patriarchal commonplaces which pass for Cabinet thinking about the family belong to the same universe of thought. If they recommend themselves to the public, it is because they have their roots deep in British lore. □

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DIARY

Christopher Price

To France to see how Mitterrand is coping. It turns out to be the week during which the Left very nearly disappeared down an electoral and financial drain. In the event, the first socialist President of the Sixth Republic is saved by the spirit of Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle's *'deuxième tour'* – the second round in each election – was designed to give the French a week to ponder the awful prospect of socialism and return to their natural conservative instincts. This time, a hesitant working class, after massive abstentions the first time round, repented and came out to save Mitterrand just enough local political support to continue his plans for devolution. It is ironic that just as Thatcher is moving towards Napoleonic centralism by destroying local government and the trade unions, Mitterrand is inching France gently in the other direction. Whereas in Paris, it's open conflict between Chirac and the government, in the provinces the tension is more subtle. I spent four days in Lyons with my Select Committee looking at youth unemployment – Keith Joseph had said 'Why don't you go to France to see how they do these things?' The prefect, now relegated to one half of his Préfecture, gave us an excellent lunch; the following day the President of the *Conseil Général*, gave us an even better one in the other half. I emerged from this culinary competition to catch the new TGV express to Paris, as clear as I could be through the Beaujolais that French centralism is on the wane and devolution taking root.

○

I'm in Paris for a grand conference of the European Left, entitled *'Sortir de la Crise'*, and canvassing ways and means of escaping from our deflationary slough of despond. Our benevolent patron is France's Tony Benn, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, (for the moment) Minister of Research and Industry; we discuss the options for a concerted, socialist dash for Keynesian growth in Europe. I can't help reflecting on my ride on Jean-Pierre's pride and joy, the 150 mph Lyons-Paris express. The French had the brilliantly simple idea of just straightening the track, rather than inventing (like us) some new, complicated railway engine which was clever at going round bends. For all his talk of pragmatism, Chevènement is one of the few European politicians who wants to drive the economy ahead at 150 mph; but even he admits it has to be done in socialist solidarity – it's difficult for one country to do so alone. If you do, the Germans just put boulders on the line to crash your train, as they seem to have done for the franc this week.

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Throughout the weekend, I had an unmistakeable sense of *déjà vu*, and remembered July 1966 when I'd just got into Parliament and watched mesmerised as Harold Wilson crumpled under a similar onslaught from without. It now seems that Jacques Delors, Mitterrand's more cautious, church-going Chancellor of the Exchequer (who was understandably preoccupied and absent from our conference), will try to puff France rather more slowly out of the depression. Had he been at the conference, he'd have picked up a good deal of wisdom on the dilemmas that will face a future socialist Chancellor in this country. Educating voters about Labour's ability to cope with this dilemma is one of our crucial tasks in the run-up to the general election. Peter Archer, our trade spokesman, was there to represent the Shadow Cabinet; I wish one or two other of his colleagues had also been able to make the journey.

○

That the gathering took place at all was largely due to 18 months of painstaking preparation by Stuart Holland – whose Bennism has excluded him from Labour's front bench over the past few years and left him free for this sort of thing. He edited the paperback which formed the report to the conference (*Out of Crisis*; Spokesman Books, Gamble St., Nottingham; £2.95). It should be compulsory reading for the authors of Labour's 'Campaign Document'. Mindless anti-marketism has given Labour a quite unnecessary, ostrich-like, isolationist image over recent years. Stuart's attempt to bring together socialist economists from all over Europe could begin to turn the tide against the monopoly of intellectual plausibility which, quite astonishingly, the monetarist academics have begun to patent for themselves.

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This was the puzzle that hung over the conference. Why should it be that Friedman and Hayek, whose ideas have so patently failed to produce growth or prosperity in practice, still enjoy such a *chic* reputation. I suppose the monetarist academics were those with an eye to the main chance. Over the past 20 years they have been working up a *mafiosi* conspiracy with right-wing politicians, and are now reaping jobs and status. (Left-wing sociologists did much the same in the '40s and '50s.) Stuart has begun a socialist academic mafia fightback. Not just with the help of the Department of Applied Economics at Cambridge (so ill-used by the SSRC) who were there in force in Paris; a whole European academic network was developing, which could one day turn political and form the basis of an alternative socialist economic framework within a reshaped Europe. Pie in the sky? I suspect not. For it was quite clear to the conference that the cobbled-up German-French agreement in Brussels was mere sticking plaster until the next time. Plenty of European socialists are ready for the day that the EEC in its present form breaks under the strain.

○

Even if it does, I am quite sure that our sumptuous Paris embassy will continue to be, proportionately, our most expensive. It now has, at last, a genuine meritocratic incumbent, Sir John Fretwell, a scion of Chesterfield Grammar School, who moves with unusual self-confidence around his aristocratic palace in the rue Faubourg St Honoré. But he has problems with it, to which he applies creative imagination. Q. Now spring has hit Paris, how to get his vast acreage of lawn mown free? A. Send in the War Graves Commission. They did not die in vain.

ROGER WODDIS

Right of Asylum

Tory MPs were prominent in protesting against the Home Office decision to deport Stancu Papusoiu back to Romania.

The partisans of liberty were livid
To think of someone facing jail or worse:
They feared a journey started on the tarmac
Might end in mourners following a hearse,
And found it odd the Minister's decision
Was one he was unwilling to reverse.

To speculate why some receive asylum
And certain others are returned to base
Is not to disbelieve the hapless victim
Or minimise the merits of his case;
But praise to him who shows selective anger
And manages to keep a solemn face.

Conservatives are bound by truth and
honour,
And never hold with sending people back –
Although, of course, the precept varies
slightly
In cases where the applicant is black.
The rule is any stick to beat a dog with,
Depending on the hound you wish to
whack.

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FOREIGN NEWS: ROMANIA

Stalinism lives

Stancu Papusoiu, a Romanian worker who reached England by stowing away in lorries, was refused asylum by the Home Office, which put him forcibly on a Romanian aircraft bound directly for Bucharest. The Home Office's indifference to his certain fate aroused a storm of protest, even among Tory MPs. But the British and western governments have long appeased the regime with the worst civil rights record in Eastern Europe – solely because of Romania's anti-Moscow stand. Andrew Csepel looks at that record

IT IS A JOURNALISTIC cliché that the Soviet Union tolerates Romania's relatively independent foreign policy because of President Ceausescu's uncompromising Stalinism at home. Little is published about how this actually affects Romanian citizens. Recently, there has been a certain amount written on Romania's chronically weak economy, but this is merely a reflection of the concern felt by the Western banking community in the light of its experience with Poland. The brutality of the Securitate (the Romanian Secret Police) against Romanian workers and intellectuals – not to mention the appalling treatment of the Hungarian and German minorities – would be tailor-made for Western propaganda if they occurred in another Warsaw Pact state. But these abuses are largely ignored, as the West exploits the friction between Romania and the Soviet Union and leaves its own public ignorant of what *really* goes on in the land it knows best for Vlad the Impaler – Dracula.

In 1977, there was a series of strikes in the Romanian mining district of the Jiu Valley – traditionally a militant working-class area. Estimates suggest that between 35,000 and 90,000 workers took part. The strikers' chief demand was the repeal of a law, concerning their pensions, which would have meant a further drop in their living standard. Two Central Committee emissaries, sent by Ceausescu to investigate, were arrested by the miners who promised to release them only if Ceausescu himself came to negotiate. In a rare dialogue with those in whose name he rules, Ceausescu agreed to the strikers' demands and gave an assurance that there would be no reprisals. He reneged on both counts. After the return to work, the mines were occupied by the military, signalling the start of a long and ruthless campaign of repression which continues to this day.

The first incident happened soon after the end of the strikes, when two of the workers' leaders, Jurca and Dobre, were killed in an accident. The authorities held no enquiry into their deaths. Since then, over 3,000 workers involved in the strikes have disappeared. It is known that the majority has been sent to labour camps, but some have been forcibly admitted to psychiatric institutions, and it is presumed that a few have been liquidated. Persistent attempts have been made by Amnesty International and the ILO to establish the whereabouts of these 'desaparacidos' (to use a term more popularly connected with Argentina). The government has answered none of their letters.

In 1979, a Free Trades Union, SLOMR (the Free Trade Union of the Working People of Romania), was founded with over 2,000 members. Romanian emigré organisations, particularly the Paris-based 'Council for the Defence of Human Rights in Romania', gave this event publicity, but it received little attention in the British press. Significantly, SLOMR attracted members from all of Romania's nationalities, particularly from the Hungarian minority. This proved that Ceausescu's hysterical 'Romanisation' programme has not cut as deeply into the working class as he had hoped.

NOT ENOUGH IS KNOWN about SLOMR in the West, but those members whose names and addresses did reach the West have all disappeared. Recently, one important exception has emerged. Vasile Parasciv has long been active in the workers' opposition in Romania. He was quick to support SLOMR after its formation and was rewarded with abduction by the Securitate. For a long time, it was feared that he had finally been killed by the regime. However, in August 1982, two French journalists spoke to him in his flat in Ploiesti. He is under effective house arrest with a constant Securitate guard over his house. That Ceausescu has not dared order his murder and has allowed him home suggests that he may be slightly more sensitive to Western opinion than is generally assumed.

Other members of SLOMR have not been so lucky. Workers and intellectuals involved in last year's riots and strikes in the southern Romanian city of Giurgiu are being severely harassed. As yet, details about police action remain unconfirmed, but it is rumoured that two strike organisers from the area have been murdered. Such is the extent of the reprisals (between 4,000 and 7,000 'desaparacidos' since 1977), that the authorities are beginning to requisition civilian hospitals to accommodate those interned. Since early 1982, Ward 32 of the Gataia Hospital in the Timis region has been under constant guard by the Milicia and access to it is now prohibited.

A Romanian political activist I talked with remarked: 'Whenever there is a political arrest in Czechoslovakia, the West is up in arms, but because it wishes to court favour with Ceausescu (a singularly futile thing to do), it ignores the plight of thousands of workers held illegally in Romania. Until the West brings pressure to bear on the 'Conducator' [Ceausescu], he will continue his gross violations of Helsinki and the UN Declaration of Human Rights.' □

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LEBANON

Protection racket

Julie Flint on the new militia guarding Palestinian refugees

Sidon

ISRAEL HAS EXTENDED its efforts to create a string of village militias to the Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon, encouraging the formation of a Palestinian 'National Guard of the Camps of the South', led by a well known collaborator, Abdullah Nasser.

The emergence of the 'National Guard' is causing profound concern in Sidon's Ein Helweh camp, the largest refugee camp in South Lebanon. Refugees, already terrified by a campaign of persecution by rightist militiamen, fear that the presence of armed Palestinians (and the cycle of reaction it could bring) will increase the likelihood of new attacks on Palestinians when Israel withdraws its troops from the Sidon area – if not before.

The 'National Guard' appeared late in February, when Nasser, a Palestinian imprisoned by the PLO for collaborating with Israel, suddenly appeared in the Sidon area. At a news conference early in March, Nasser praised Israel and its Lebanese protégé Major Saad Haddad, and declared himself

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the true representative of Palestinians in the south, 'with the blessing of all sides'. He accused the PLO leadership of 'fleeing' Lebanon when Israel invaded and proclaimed that the 'National Guard' would 'prevent a return to the methods of violence whose tragic results were suffered by our people'.

That he referred to the methods of the PLO, and no one else, has become abundantly clear in the two weeks since he criticised the 'erroneous and negative practices' of Yasser Arafat's organisation. Speaking in Ein Helweh's mosque last week, Nasser promised to secure the release of Palestinians held in Ansar, Israel's prison camp in South Lebanon, 'if you forget the PLO'. He makes no secret of the fact that his men 'detain' suspected PLO members and hand them over to Israeli authorities.

'The Israelis are using him to ensure there is no PLO presence in the camp,' says a Palestinian doctor in Ein Helweh. 'His main action is against the PLO, not for the security of the camps.'

The size and spread of the 'National Guard' is still far from clear. Estimates of the number of men behind Nasser range from 40 to several hundred. Although he has toured all the camps in the South, the only evidence of any organisation among his followers lies in their apparent licence to carry arms. The 'National Guard' has no office and no known officers. Nasser insists that it is a 'civilian' group – not explaining how a civilian group can pretend to offer protection – but his chief aide has no compunction about hoisting up his jacket to show off the pistol in his trouser pocket. Israeli officials say that they have not supplied the Guard with arms, but acknowledge that they allow some of Nasser's men to carry guns 'for their own protection'. They deny that the men also have submachine guns.

'We want all Palestinians to like Nasser and cooperate with him,' the Israeli military governor in Sidon told a camp official. 'He is a good man, a brave man. He is ready to make sacrifices for his beliefs.'

THE ESTABLISHMENT of Nasser's 'National Guard' is a natural follow-up to Israel's attempts to recruit village militias to play a supporting role in South Lebanon to Haddad's 'Free Lebanon Army'.

Nasser appears to see a special role for himself in the Israeli scheme, comparing himself with Mustafa Dudeen, the head of the 'Village Leagues', armed and trained by Israel in an unsuccessful attempt to provide an alternative to pro-PLO municipal ties on the occupied West Bank. Dudeen, he says, 'is an honourable and sincere man working in the interest of peace and the tormented Palestinian people.' As the Village Leagues represent the Palestinians in Israel, so the 'National Guard' represents the Palestinians in Lebanon. But the opposite would seem to be true.

Nasser is generally perceived as an intruder who has no roots in the South and no known metier but that of collaborator. A short, thick-set man given to three-piece pin-striped suits and open-necked shirts, he has a gangster's turn of phrase. Israeli authorities were reportedly discomfited when he told journalists at his news conference: 'We will cut off every malignant hand.' A UN worker who refused to give his friends preferential treatment was told to think again because 'so far you've only seen the clean side of my face'.

Little is known of Nasser before he turned up in Sidon in February. He admits to having been jailed by the PLO as an Israeli agent, but holds back on detail. Palestinians say he was recruited by Israel as a student in West Germany and was trained by MOSSAD to infiltrate the PLO, eventually earning the rank of Major in the intelligence service. He is thought to have escaped from a PLO jail in Beirut during the Israeli invasion last summer and to have worked as an informer in Ansar before appearing in Sidon.

The promise to get Palestinians released from Ansar, where some 3,000 are still detained, is one of Nasser's biggest holds over the refugees. 'We don't care what he is or what he does,' says one woman in Ein Helweh. 'We just want our sons back. On this we'll judge him.' The promise of security has also won him a measure of support in the camps. 'The people were glad to hear him say the Guard will protect them,' says one man who heard him. 'They are desperate. The ordinary people are afraid.'

The fear dates back to early February, when Christian militiamen began ordering middle-class Palestinians out of their homes in the suburbs of Sidon, telling them to move into Ein Helweh. Leaflets appealed to the Lebanese: 'Noble sons of Sidon and its environs, help us drive the Palestinians from the land of Lebanon.' A second, more vicious leaflet appeared late last month, addressed directly to Palestinians:

> You must move quickly into your camps to protect yourselves from the range of the united Lebanese people. Our national unity has been threatened by your existence. It cannot be recovered while your rotten band continues in the streets and buildings of Sidon. Time is short and running out quickly. Remember that no one likes you . . . No one can know when this rage will explode and rise up against you on every centimeter of our land.

Killings accompanied the eviction campaign. Almost a dozen men were shot to death, burned and mutilated. Scores of families fled into Ein Helweh. Others left the area. After vigorous protests by UNRWA, the UN agency for refugees, the killings stopped. But the fear remains.

'A National Guard will give the militias another reason to make a massacre,' says Fikri Fa'our, a Palestinian doctor in Ein Helweh whose flirtation with Israel appears to have stopped short of allowing his 'human and social Palestinian committee' to be armed. 'This is dangerous. It is not the time for weapons.'

There is little doubt that armed Palestinians are a provocation in the South, if not to the rightist Christian militias, then to the Shiite Moslems of Amal who hate the Palestinians who fought them for dominance in South Lebanon.

'It will tempt us to retaliate,' says a leader of Amal in Sidon. 'It will tempt every Lebanese.' □

IMF

Funding South Africa

Martin Bailey reveals the role of Britain in last year's controversial loan

NO OTHER LOAN in the International Monetary Fund's 37-year history has aroused as much concern as last November's major credit to South Africa. Leaked IMF and US State Department documents now make it possible to trace the full story of how South Africa won its billion dollar battle.

The Americans actually knew about Pretoria's application at least three months before the IMF Executive Board was informed. A draft cable from Washington to the US embassy in Pretoria explained, last July, that South Africans were about to apply for IMF assistance and that this would probably lead to calls to expel South Africa from the IMF. The American embassy was warned to 'handle this matter with great caution and care' because of the danger that a South African request could trigger yet another attempt 'to politicise the Fund.'

One month later, an IMF staff mission secretly travelled to Pretoria for discussions. Chancellor Howe claims that the IMF Executive Board in Washington is 'not routinely notified' about such visits – but according to the confidential minutes of the IMF meeting which later approved the loan, the Fund's Managing Director, Jacques de Larosière, admitted that he had been asked to keep these negotiations secret from his Executive Board, and that this was the first time in his five years of office that this had happened. De Larosière explained that this had caused him some embarrassment – but, in the South African case, 'secrecy was absolutely necessary'.

On 4 October, South Africa publicly announced that it was applying for IMF loans worth $1,083 million. The request was in two parts: a $394 million regular 'stand-by' credit and a $689 million loan from the Compensatory Financing Facility, a fund for assisting countries with falling export earnings. Despite the gold slump, the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld* commented: 'Actually we could get along without the loan, but the interest rate is so attractive . . . It's a feather in our cap, since the granting of such a loan means our house is in order.'

As the Americans had predicted, the South African request sparked off a wave of anger at the United Nations. Here was the IMF, a UN Specialised Agency, about to provide financial assistance to South Africa – when the vast majority of UN members

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had approved a string of resolutions calling for economic sanctions against the apartheid regime. On 21 October, the UN General Assembly called on the IMF 'to refrain from granting any credits or other assistance to South Africa'. The resolution was approved by 121 to three (with 23 abstentions). Only Britain, the US and West Germany voted against.

Two weeks later, the 22 Executive Directors of the IMF assembled behind the heavy wooden doors of the board room of the Fund's Washington headquarters. Britain's representative, John Anson, began by stating that he supported the South African requests 'on their economic merits', before recommending 'an appropriately firm monetary policy'.

The most interesting section of Anson's speech dealt with 'rigidities in the labour market'. In the *bank-speak* beloved of IMF directors, this was the euphemism used to describe the economic consequences of the apartheid system. Anson optimistically believed that 'the authorities recognised that problem' and that there had been a welcome expansion in training programmes. But he added that if economic growth were to continue, 'a greater effort would have to be made to increase labour mobility, use more of the available labour resources, and enhance the supply of skilled labour through government and government-assisted training programmes'.

After Britain's tactful comments on the rigidities of the labour market, a succession of Third World representatives stood up to criticise the South African request. But during this bizarre debate, the word 'apartheid' was not mentioned by a single Third World director. Indeed, during the day-long discussion on South Africa, apartheid was only mentioned twice – both times, ironically enough, by the United States.

In the club-like atmosphere of the IMF there is no formal vote on loan requests. The Executive Directors speak, and the chairman then sums up the feeling of the meeting. During the South African discussion, eight directors, representing 26 countries holding 52 per cent of the weighted votes, spoke in favour. These included Britain, the second most powerful IMF member, with seven per cent of the voting power. Seven directors, representing 68 countries holding 21 per cent of the votes, said no. South Africa had won its billion dollar battle.

Britain and its Western allies argued that the IMF should not be politicised. As Geoffrey Howe explained: 'I am convinced that most Fund members realise that if overtly political conditions are set for South Africa today, they may themselves face political conditions tomorrow.'

But critics of the South African loan believe that the IMF has already been politicised. Dr Jim Morrell of the Washington-based Centre for International Policy has pointed out that the US politicised the Fund 'by making it break its own rules in favour of El Salvador in 1981 and by citing ingenious technical rules against Grenada, Vietnam and – in other development banks – Nicaragua in 1982'. □

GRENADA

Island socialism

Alan George looks at a four-year old revolution

THE TINY CARIBBEAN island state of Grenada has much to celebrate on this month's fourth anniversary of its socialist revolution. While the economic and social problems of other Caribbean countries have multiplied as the world recession has deepened, Grenada last year recorded an overall economic growth in real terms of 5.5 per cent – higher than anywhere else in the western hemisphere. Unemployment, a staggering 49 per cent at the time of the 1979 Revolution, is down to 14 per cent. Inflation last year was held at 7 per cent.

Maurice Bishop's People's Revolutionary Government has not achieved all this by savaging social welfare programmes. Free education and health care have been maintained and extended. Last year, 3,000 households benefited from a housing-repair programme that offers soft loans of up to $EC 1,000 and repayment over six years. A national insurance scheme was launched last month.

Such progress has been attained against a constant backdrop of efforts by the United States to isolate Grenada and hamper its development drive. The Reagan Administration asserts that the tiny island (population 120,000) is merely a base for Cuban/Soviet 'subversion'. It attacks the PRG for suspending parliamentary democracy and for human rights violations. President Reagan summed it up during his working holiday in Barbados last summer. Grenada, he explained, 'bears the Soviet and Cuban trademark, which means it will attempt to spread the virus among its neighbours.'

Washington asserts that the airport will be a base for Cuban/Soviet troops. Last year, Stephen Bosworth, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, told a congressional committee: 'We expect Grenada will repay its debt to Cuba by providing access to the Point Salines airport for transit flights to Africa and other military uses.' He neglected to mention that the Cubans have successfully managed to reach Africa already, without the benefit of an airport in Grenada.

The airport is in fact vital for an expansion of tourism, one of the pillars of the economy. The existing airport, Pearl's, cannot handle large jets, and the only way into Grenada by air is via neighbouring islands. In a report last August, the World Bank – hardly an agency of leftist subversion – agreed that Grenada badly needed a modern airport.

Maurice Bishop scorns Westminster-style democracy as inappropriate to Grenada's circumstances, arguing that the urgent tasks of socio-economic development require much more active involvement and commitment by the people than the casting of a vote once every five years. Grenadians are not without influence on their affairs. A network of local parish councils (open to all residents), trade unions and grassroots bodies, such as the National Women's Organisation, meets regularly and formulates recommendations that carry weight with the People's Revolutionary Government.

The Americans have backed such words with action. In August 1981, US forces staged a full-scale dress rehearsal in Puerto Rico for an invasion of Grenada. The exercise was codenamed Amber and the Amberines. Grenada's full name is Grenada and the Grenadines.

In the same year, US envoys were dispatched to Europe in a partly successful bid to persuade governments to boycott an EEC conference in Brussels, convened to raise finance for Grenada's new international airport, under construction at Point Salines on the southern tip of the island. Maurice Bishop summed it up last month: 'It has been pretty nasty, all-round aggression and destabilisation against us.' The British government has refused to renew a 1974 aid agreement, giving concern for 'civil liberties and democratic rights' as its excuse.

Grenada's close links with Havana are no secret, but Cuban involvement in the island is largely confined to development assistance. About half the 800-strong workforce building the Point Salines airport are Cuban engineers giving on-the-job training to Grenadians. Most of the construction materials and much of the heavy equipment for the project were donated by Cuba.

At the end of 1981, almost 100 people were in detention without trial, many of them without charge. But the situation is improving; large numbers were released last year. Mr Bishop told me that 'less than forty' were still being held, and that they would be charged and brought to trial for offences that would include corruption and involvement in terrorism.

He is disarmingly frank: 'Nobody who is honest will ever expect that a revolution can succeed if the minority that continues to oppose, and tries to use violence, is not ruthlessly crushed, in the interests of helping the majority.' Pointing to unstinting US support for such countries as Israel and Chile, Bishop dismissed American protestations over human rights in Grenada as 'a red herring; pure hypocrisy.'

Grenadians are convinced that it is not human rights or the 'Communist threat' that really worries Washington, but the prospect of other Caribbean peoples finding much to admire and emulate in the Grenadian model of development. 'The Americans are very concerned that this experiment we are building becomes successful, and therefore holds out attractions for neighbouring islands,' Maurice Bishop told me. 'When people in neighbouring islands hear about what is happening in Grenada, they ask questions of their own governments. The Americans are deadly concerned about that.' □

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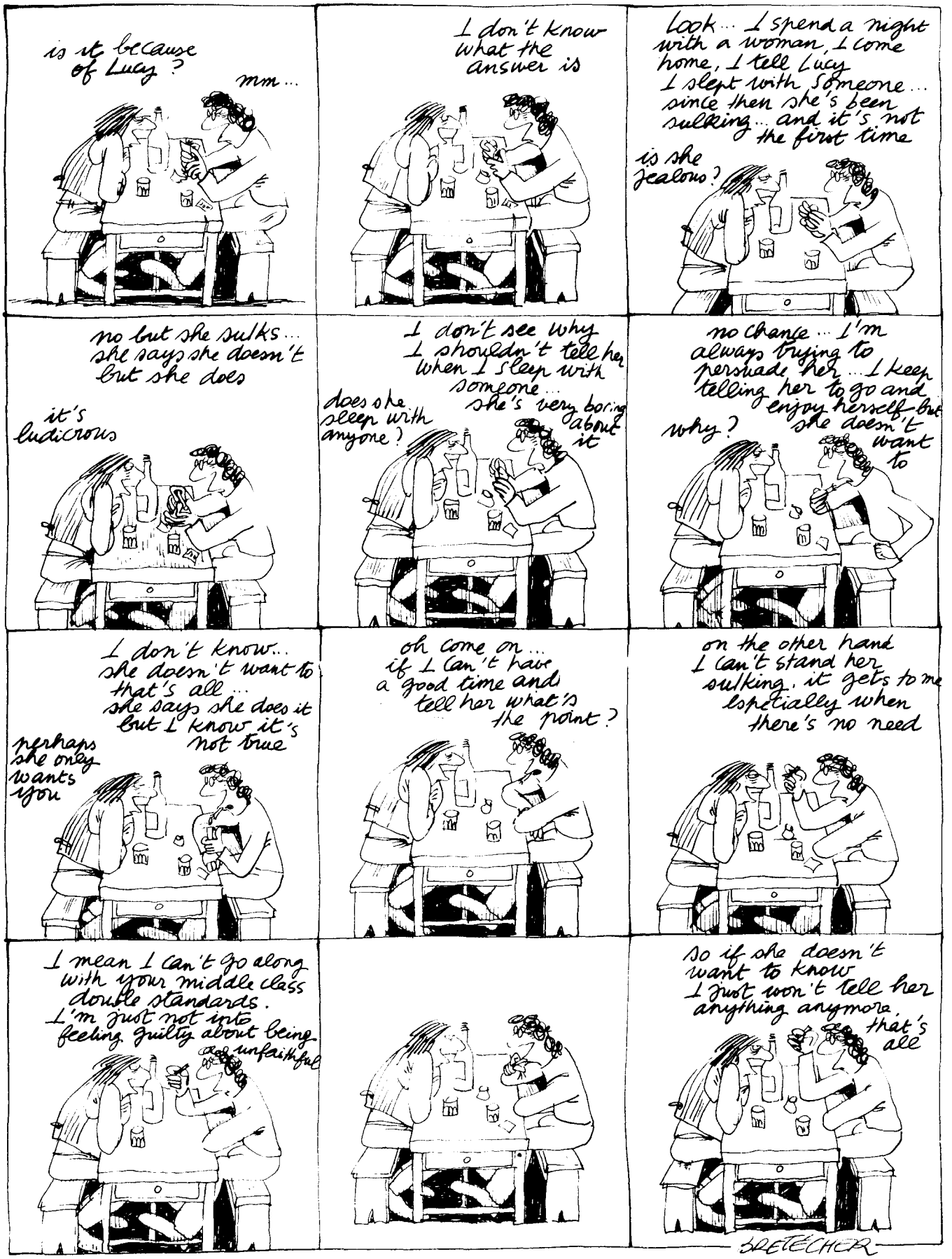
POLYGAMY


is it because of Lucy?
mm...
I don't know what the answer is
Look... I spend a night with a woman, I come home, I tell Lucy I slept with someone... since then she's been sulking... and it's not the first time
is she jealous?
no but she sulks... she says she doesn't but she does
it's ludicrous
I don't see why I shouldn't tell her when I sleep with someone... she's very boring about it
does she sleep with anyone?
no chance... I'm always trying to persuade her... I keep telling her to go and enjoy herself but she doesn't want to
why?
I don't know... she doesn't want to that's all... she says she does it but I know it's not true
perhaps she only wants you
oh come on... if I can't have a good time and tell her what's the point?
on the other hand I can't stand her sulking, it gets to me especially when there's no need
I mean I can't go along with your middle class double standards. I'm just not into feeling guilty about being unfaithful
so if she doesn't want to know I just won't tell her anything anymore, that's all
BRETÉCHER

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LETTERS

Noises from an all-male organ

Roger Scruton, Editor, The Salisbury Review, London SW1

In the 18 March issue of the *New Statesman* Raphael Samuel makes various remarks about this journal, which perhaps ought to be corrected.

The Salisbury Review has nothing to do with the Tory Philosophy Group, and does not enjoy the patronage of the Prime Minister. Mr Samuel has been misled by chance pieces of journalism, themselves founded on speculation.

Because his article (and the series to which it belongs) fails to make any distinction between conservatism – a philosophy which people defend and attack for a variety of good and bad reasons, none of which seem to have occurred to Mr Samuel – and the Conservative Party – a strange British institution which for the most part gets along with no philosophy whatsoever – Mr Samuel has been misled into thinking that this journal must have some connection with the 'Party's present anti-feminist campaign'. That is not so. We have no connection with any campaign, and certainly not with one conducted by a political party. I doubt that there *is* any such campaign. Mr Samuel's argument, which proceeds by association of ideas rather than by logic, fails to persuade me of its existence.

His own remarks, which, in a manner that has become typical of left-wing criticism of conservative ideas, attribute motives rather than reasons to his opponent, show that he has not really understood the objections that some of us have to feminism. It is assumed that any objection to feminism as an ideology is an objection to 'the women's movement', and that an objection to 'women's studies' as a university subject is an objection to both. This blurring of distinctions shows a remarkable disrespect for complex issues. Some of us oppose feminism precisely because we believe that its misconceptions are harmful to women, and to many of the just complaints which the women's movement has enshrined. The possibility of this point of view is removed by Mr Samuel's self-intoxicated rhetoric, but I think that it is time he considered it.

This journal is not an all-male organ of Tory aesthetes. I freely admit that I am male, and that I have an interest in aesthetics. But any suggestion that our pages are closed to women, or that our writers take an 'aesthetic' view of life, is absurd. Mr Samuel will be able to see this when he reads – as I am sure he will – the next issue.

Seeing Green

Avril Fox, London SW6

Andy Robert's letter (*NS* 18 March) declaring that the Greens should be in the labour movement fudges certain issues. He ignores the fundamental difference between Green philosophy and Labour policy, clearly stated by Jonathon Porritt: that Labour and the trade unions support industrial growth, which the Greens recognise as a major evil. He asserts that 'ecological stability is incompatible with capitalism', while the Greens recognise that *all* forms of 'ism' are incompatible with ecological stability unless they accept the basic principle of putting the Earth first and the short-term desires of the human species second.

Whether, as Andy Roberts declares, 'class remains a basic reality of our society' is a debatable point. The steady growth of the *alternative society*, ignored in Labour and Conservative circles alike, and the composition of growing movements such as Friends of the Earth, CND and the Ecology Party, seem to indicate that in 50 years or so the 'class struggle' will have become a mere phrase in history books; the term already has a fusty sound.

Nuclear safety

J. G. Collier, Director, Safety & Reliability Directorate, UK Atomic Energy Authority

I take the strongest exception to the remarks made in the article by Rob Edwards entitled 'Information on nuclear safety suppressed' (*NS* 4 March). The article alleges that I was instrumental in the suppression of a report which 'stressed the possibility that the steel pressure vessel used in the American-style PWR planned for Sizewell could be subject to catastrophic failure.'

These allegations are false. The fact of the matter is that the unpublished report SRD R224 by Dr Quirk deals with a series of tests on steel plates to study the growth of cracks, and does not refer directly to PWR pressure vessels. The interpretation of such tests is complicated by a number of basic technical factors including the method of applying the load and the evaluation of the resulting stress patterns.

The article quotes selectively from my letter of 24 February, written in my then capacity of Director of Technical Studies stationed at Harwell, to Mr Johnstone, Dr Quirk's supervisor. The concern underlying the letter was that drawing the report to the attention of Dr Gittus (who was due to give evidence to the Sizewell Inquiry on the related topic of degraded core analysis) might result in undue emphasis being placed on the work, since its findings had not been subject to peer review, the normal scientific procedure of critical appraisal and debate by other experts.

Subsequently, during the spring of 1982, I personally arranged for Dr Quirk to present his work to a sub-group of the PWR Pressure Vessel (Marshall) Study Group. The sub-group, which like the main group, consists of eminent independent experts as well as Authority staff, deals with the technical aspects of fracture. It concluded that the findings presented in the report did not undermine the conclusions on this topic of the main Study Group report.

I am also disturbed at another aspect of the article. When a reporter from the *New Statesman* approached Dr Quirk prior to the publication of the article, he was told by Dr Quirk that not only had his work been presented to the Study Group but also that he had presented a paper on the topic to an international conference in Lyon, France, in the summer of 1982 and would present a further paper on the matter to a conference in Chicago later this year. None of these facts were included in the article. Rather than suppressing the work of Mr Irvine and Dr Quirk they have been encouraged to continue with it and to set it in the context of other fracture mechanics work undertaken in the Authority and elsewhere.

Rob Edwards writes: Mr Collier has apparently not read my article very closely. For a start, he misquotes it: I did not say that the unpublished report SRD R224 'stressed' the possibility of PWR pressure vessel failure, I said it 'assessed' such a possibility. Such misreading perhaps accounts for some of Mr Collier's reaction.

The central point is that the information contained in the report was deliberately kept from the Sizewell Inquiry. That Mr Collier does not deny. Indeed the confidential correspondence quoted, in which he advised that 'it would not be helpful to pursue the matter further', speaks for itself.

If Mr Collier and his employers were to make a copy of SRD R224 available to the Inquiry, objectors and others could make their own judgments as to its importance.

Roads, rails & resources

Alfred Sherman, Director of Studies, Centre for Policy Studies, London SW1

Mr Hamer ('Think Tank Off The Rails', *NS* 4 March) writes with very strong feelings at the expense of concern for factual accuracy and logic.

Professor Walters is not a member of the CPS Transport Study Group, nor is Alfred Goldstein; in fact we have never actually met him. Mr Hamer could have ascertained this had he followed the usual journalistic practice of getting in touch with people before going into print.

Worse still, his white-hot indignation leads him to write as though wishing to convert railway lines to roads is somehow wicked or impious *ab initio*. A single moment's reflection would have led him to realise that we are dealing with a question of what best use can be made of resources, in this case state-owned, namely the network of routes at present controlled by British Rail. Accounting for some 95 per cent of all segregated way, they carry only 10 per cent of combined inland passenger and freight mileage. The other 90 per cent goes by 'road' – most of it actually urban streets and country lanes. Nine out of ten people in this country do not step on to a train in the course of a year. Apart from the mainly middle and upper-middle income commuters in the South East, the vast majority of people travel to work and leisure by road – namely bus, coach and car – or bicycle. They would benefit greatly as passengers and urban residents alike were public transport and heavy goods vehicles diverted onto a segregated road system now used (in fact under-used) by British Rail.

Indeed, the only beneficiaries of the present arrangements are British Rail staff and the rail union bureaucracy. Understandably, these monopolistic vested interests resent challenge, as they have done throughout history, and as their fellow-monopolists in London Transport do. It is cause for sadness that the *New Statesman*, once a critic of received ideas, should now be standard bearer for the philistine.

Early stirrings

Cyril Hughes, Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd

It may interest Duncan Campbell and John Minnion (*NS* 11 Mar) to know that the first public meeting ever held at which the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons were condemned was at St Helen's, Lancashire, in January 1943 – three months after the first chain reaction and two and a half years before Hiroshima. I was the chairman. The speaker was Bob Edwards, now a Labour MP for Wolverhampton, then prominent in the ILP and the Chemical Workers' Union.

The ILP had good sources of information, even of the so-secret Manhattan project. I remember that Bob's talk went into much more detail about the atomic bomb than he published later that year in a booklet. Those who heard him came away from that meeting with the distinct impression that the American and British governments were determined to keep the war going until this obscene weapon was ready for use. The insane policy of 'unconditional surrender' ensured that this aim was achieved, at the cost of millions of lives.

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Stephen Mullin

A time to build

The Image of the Architect
ANDREW SAINT *Yale* £9.95

Camera Press

Architectural Press

The Architect as Gentleman, Lutyens, and (inset) as Entrepreneur, Poulson

Nice timing. The closed season for architects ended remarkably early this year, with salvoes in the *Sunday Times* and *Guardian:* from the right, in the shape of Edwina Currie, and the left, courtesy Jill Craigie. And here, right on cue, is Andrew Saint's thoughtful and erudite look at the architectural profession, with a definitive answer to their polemics. Both start with the now obligatory 'tiny-tots-in-tower-blocks' winge, before retreating to their respective political camps. Mrs Currie, for the Tupperware Party, sees salvation in the little chap round the corner who can do it for half the price, while Ms Craigie presents the Wine and Cheese Party solution of much media talk, followed mysteriously by the spontaneous generation of a 'new Lutyens'.

Chapters seven and five respectively of *The Image of the Architect* should knock these windy idiocies on the head pretty smartly. 'The Architect as Entrepreneur' charts in some detail the grubby career of John Poulson (who 'couldn't design a brick shithouse'), and, more sketchily, that of Richard Seifert (who presumably has better libel lawyers), while 'The Architect as Gentleman' quotes Lutyens himself on 'all this talk making the ears stick out till they make blinkers for the eyes', and concludes perceptively that 'it is as perilous to deliver over cities to individuals like . . . Lutyens who have made their names from country houses as to highway engineers or to the representatives of market forces'.

Saint might have added that it is equally perilous for the profession to have cities 'delivered over' to it, for it is no coincidence that the two periods in which architects have endured almost universal opprobrium – the 1860s and 1870s, and the same decades of this century – have been ones which have seen the erection of large quantities of public buildings. Public money can mean inexperienced patronage, opportunistic penny-pinching, corruption, and wonder-products discovered by the client on the golf course. Public buildings, and especially housing, provide a focus for general grievances, particularly in the field of management and maintenance. And large public works programmes create enormous strains on the profession, encouraging the promotion of hacks and deadbeats to vacant drawing-boards, and a swollen entry of unsuitable students to schools of architecture.

In the intervening years, the profession bumbles on, probably no more inadequate in its training, incompetent in its practice, and protectionist in its quality control than medicine or the law. Little is built; jobs are scarce; the bright boys usually make it to the top, and the inevitable disasters are on a small enough scale to avoid cataclysms like the 'system-building' spree of the early 1960s. I speak, of course, of this country, and of the reality, not the image. For the public face of the architect still remains that of Saint's first chapter – 'The Architect as Hero and Genius' – exemplified by Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead:* a titan battling with *untermensch* clients, absolved from all moral guilt by his creative genius.

Hilarious though this appalling travesty may be, its influence is still real enough today, whether on 'Mark, the young architect', star of a myriad teen fantasy magazines; on the hordes of well-meaning middle-class parents who steer their offspring into a profession which combines an (imaginary) fat income with a touch of Bohemia; or on the bow-tied notables who alternately propose to whisk away the ills of society with the touch of a 4H clutch pencil or claim breast-beating responsibility for every human disaster since the Black Death.

The reality, as Saint shows in his touching and illuminating study of the last hundred years in this country, is rather different. Small, inefficient, provincial practices scratching a living at the 'business' of domestic buildings, sighing vainly for the glamour and status of the 'gentlemen' – the 'art men' – who followed Soane away from the building site into a learned profession, as Cubitt regrouped his artisans into General Contractors. Or, alternatively, the architects of real talent, skill and idealism who entered public bodies like the London County Council in the 1890s and 1950s with a commitment to social endeavour, only to be denied public recognition of their achievements, and to see their collectivist working methods destroyed by the superimposition of 'business' bureaucracy.

There were, of course, exceptions, and it is a notable fault of this collection of extended lectures, which Saint disarmingly anticipates in his introduction, that the outsiders of the 1930s make no appearance. Where is Joe Emberton, for instance, hobnobbing on the golf course with characters like Benson, the advertising king, for whom he built the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club to scupper the snobbery of Cowes? Or Owen Williams, who decided that one morning in Clough Williams-Ellis's simpering holiday village at Portmeirion was enough, and escaped with Emberton to a dirty weekend in Llandrindod Wells? Or Berthold Lubetkin and Francis Skinner, who, as Saint notes in passing, made the only real effort to reform the profession with the Architects and Technicians Organisation?

Fine architects, all of them, who earned the undying hatred of the wet and ineffectual 'gentlemen' of the MARS Group for their ability to get commissions and put up buildings on time, at cost, which still work well and look superb. Had their influence not been so fiercely resisted by the architectural establishment, and had, as Saint points out, the chastening lessons learned by the Bauhaus emigrés to the Soviet Union been put to practical use, the state of post-war architecture and the profession in this country might have been very different.

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Instead, ARCUK, the Architects Registration Council, remained firmly in the grip of the Royal Institute of British Architects, despite the growing numbers of professionals who did not choose to join the RIBA. The 'gentlemen' still ran the Institute, condoning incompetence with the retention till 1971 of back-door entry through Licentiate membership (easily disguised by the immediate purchase of a Fellowship), and reacting to competition from outside the profession by ever more extravagant claims for the architect as 'leader of a multi-disciplinary team'.

As a masterstroke, the RIBA then achieved the virtual demolition of sound architectural education in this country at the Oxford Conference of 1968, which secured the closure of small schools, expanded the bigger ones to unprecedented size, and divided the profession into 'technicians' (who did the boring bits like damp-proof courses) and 'architects', who did exciting creative things and ended up being trained in what Martin Pawley has called the 'sand-table and finger-painting approach' to architecture.

The problem will not go away. Sooner or later we will have to start building again, and when we do, as Saint demonstrates, neither the profession which we currently have in this country nor the alternative, commercially geared, big-office hustle which is all that is left of the profession in the United States will be competent to cope. Refreshingly, Saint then nails his colours to the mast. In a mixed economy, he says, stylistic egoism is an introverted irrelevance, and a refusal to work on other than 'social' or 'community' architecture an escapist cop-out. Both attitudes are founded in fantasy, which Saint explores to good effect in his discussion of 'The Myth of the Mediaeval Architect'.

Rather, we need

> a smaller architectural profession, in which imagination and artistic ability are more evenly balanced with technical and managerial experience, in which collaboration with other specialists takes on a more realistic, less high-handed meaning, and in which 'sound building' is valued above 'high art'.

Hear, hear. But to achieve this, good small practices will have to form – and advertise – their own quality organisation, with a self-selected membership. They, and salaried architects, will have to demand that ARCUK takes control of architectural education from the RIBA; that schools are forced to greatly reduce their swollen intake by rigorous selection of students; that courses revert from their present vague 'liberal arts' mish-mash to proper vocational training taught by good practitioners; and that students who fail to make the grade are ejected as swiftly, and with the same concern for the well-being of the general public, as an incompetent dental student.

It will be a long haul, if it ever happens. But if it does, and if Saint's day finally comes, then there can be no doubt that this exceptionally interesting and timely study will have played a significant part in bringing about its dawn. □

INDUSTRY
Christopher Hird

No doubt

Back from the Brink
MICHAEL EDWARDES *Collins* £9.95

'Where discussion or correspondence which were private at the time cover on-going issues which could embarrass BL or the Government, I have refrained from using the material', writes Sir Michael Edwardes in the introduction to his account of five years at BL. He goes on: 'I have drawn on all the appropriate material except where I felt that it was improper to do so.' For a book which claims to provide an 'objective' view from within the company this is an unpromising beginning. Much of the book lives up to this lack of promise.

When Edwardes arrived at BL the company employed almost 200,000 people, made about a quarter of the cars on the road in Britain, was making huge losses and needed a massive injection of capital. Under Edwardes, it received that injection; it now sells about 18 per cent of the cars in Britain, employs 100,000 people and expects to make a profit next year.

Many take the view that BL now has a future whereas it had none five years ago. Edwardes's achievement raises many interesting questions: was there any other way of saving BL? How exactly did the Edwardes management decide on its strategy? What mistakes were made? These questions are barely touched on; instead we are presented with a one-dimensional account which would put the worst writers of Victorian melodrama to shame.

Our hero has a remarkably high opinion of himself. When first offered the job, 'I was momentarily taken aback', but not for long – 'within half a minute I realised that there was a certain logic to the proposition.' Apart from this faltering half-minute, there seems to be not a moment of self-doubt thereafter.

Like everyone else Edwardes knew that BL's problem was that they couldn't make a product at a price that people were willing to pay. Edwardes's solution was to invest and improve the models, but his main aim was to reduce the work-force. 'I felt I had served my purpose: by mid-1982 the de-manning was almost completed – some 90,000 employees had left the pay roll', he says, explaining his decision to leave BL.

Sacking people was not going to be easy, but Edwardes aimed to achieve it by 're-establishing the right of management to manage'. This involved ridding BL of any semblance of industrial democracy ('a bureaucratic paperchase'), establishing a small management team and resisting any attempts at government intervention, which just amounts to 'second guessing' (a major sin in the Edwardes book).

The plan also involved a major attack on the BL shop stewards, 'shop steward' being a word Edwardes used interchangeably with 'militant', which itself seems to be synonymous with 'communist'. When these people agree with Edwardes, however, they usually become 'moderates'. There is much talk, as there was at the time, of telling the employees 'the facts in plain terms'. But this is one of the things that Edwardes never did.

'Profits', Susan Dev, professor of accounting at LSE once said, 'are not facts, they are just matters of opinion.' No one doubts – or doubted then – that BL was in deep trouble. But it was a matter of opinion how this could be altered. While senior executives met in a series of hotels to debate these matters, BL's workers were constantly presented with irreversible decisions about future plans. Edwardes, of course, sticks by all of these in his book, but provides no

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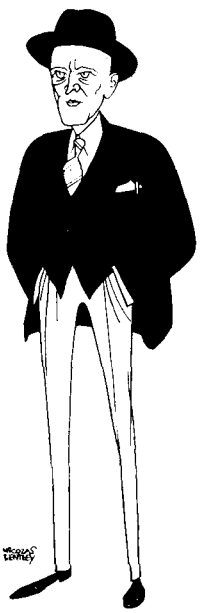
A BIOGRAPHY OF GERALD GARDINER

MURIEL BOX

'It pays full tribute to the distinct blend of intelligence, application and humanity that produced first a brilliant advocate, and later one of history's most accomplished Lord Chancellors' — Sir Harold Wilson



Gollancz

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supporting evidence to back up his judgments. For a book about business there is a remarkable paucity of financial information: not a balance sheet, not a profit and loss account, not a forecast, not an analysis of any individual plant's operations anywhere to be seen.

The problem that this poses for the reader is well illustrated by the account of the dismissal of Longbridge shop steward Derek Robinson in 1979. A big majority of BL workers had just voted to support the Edwardes 'Recovery Plan' which involved 25,000 redundancies. (The plan had many deficiencies, in particular an understatement of the number of potential redundancies: a view expressed by the *NS* at the time and borne out by events.) After the vote a pamphlet appeared, signed by Robinson and others, opposing the Plan. Edwardes explains that the CP 'was determined to replace the existing structure of society in Britain by using every means at its disposal'. They had 'orchestrated' a campaign against the Plan and were 'backing' Robinson.

No mention in the Edwardes account of how Robinson had become so absorbed into the participation scheme that he was writing joint letters with the boss of Austin Morris deploring leaks of information from the participation meetings as they were 'against the national interest'.

No mention either of something else. Edwardes believed in a plot because BL head office received confidential minutes of the CP meeting at which the campaign against the Recovery Plan was devised. 'We were struck by the similarity between the minutes', he writes, 'and the pamphlet which espoused the same cause.' There is one little problem, though: those minutes were exhaustively investigated by the *Sunday Times* Insight team – for which I now work – and found to be a forgery. Many of the people allegedly present had alibis (one was with a senior BL executive), quite apart from the fact that the group in question never met where it was alleged to have met.

Edwardes, an assiduous cutter of newspapers, must know this but chooses to ignore it. How many other times does Edwardes present such partial and self-serving accounts of events? 'The job of the journalist', John Thadeus Delane said 130 years ago, 'is the same as the historian – to seek out the truth, above all things, and to present to his readers not such things as statecraft would wish them to know but the truth as near as he can attain it.' This book is neither journalism nor history; if you seek the truth about BL, look elsewhere. □

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Faith Evans

Half-smile

An Orderly Man
DIRK BOGARDE *Chatto* £8.95

Considering the rollcall of friends who died too young, from Judy Garland to Werner Fassbinder to his beloved agent Robin Fox, it's hardly surprising that Dirk Bogarde's account of his middle years, neatly sandwiched between the making of *Death in Venice* and the loss of his mother the day after his 59th birthday, should have death as its central theme.

Yet intimations of mortality can also lead to a kind of rebirth, when priorities are re-examined, vulnerabilities admitted to, opportunities indulged. For Bogarde, middle age has meant relieved acceptance of his distaste for the vulgar trappings of showbiz and 'American money', and increasing confidence in his ability to write. A feature of this book is the stunning colour photographs of his new house in the South of France – a bold progression from the previous memoirs which must have cost his publishers (or his readers) dear. The captions alone realise a familiar English fantasy: 'Spring 1971: cleaning the site of the *potager;* fallen walls on the right'; 'Eleven years later. The cherry trees, from the Long Walk'; 'Looking towards the old kitchen. The central section was the original sheep-shed.' They are backed up by deft, often humorous descriptions of French life and landscape: the pruning of the olive trees, the sudden onslaught of the *mistral,* bemused dealings with French bureaucracy. For pure escapism it's hard to beat.

Escapism or escape? Like many ex-pats, Bogarde is grindingly, unapologetically, out of touch, and his prose sometimes carries an unfashionably autocratic ring. Of the sale of his possessions at his English house, he writes:

> For two days the housewives of Guildford and Godalming fought hysterically to outbid each other for items which ranged from a Minton tea set of sixty pieces to a wicker hamper containing two tin plates, a wooden towel rail and a hurricane lamp.

In France, he's equally scathing of the Laura-Ashley-clad Rover-driving tourists he encounters in his local *épicerie:* 'It's *him*!', they squeal. 'Don't stare at him . . . you know they *love* it!'

By becoming a famous writer, of course, Bogarde hasn't so much lost an audience as exchanged it for a new one. His novels and his earlier volumes of autobiography have been remarkably and deservedly successful: *A Postillion Struck by Lightning,* in particular, for its attractively haphazard form and its impressionistic evocation of English rural life.

These childhood recollections were also notable for the defiantly short shrift accorded his interesting parents. Bogarde's mother was a talented actress who abandoned her career after her marriage; his father was Art Editor of *The Times.* Now we learn that his mother, for whom audience was all, also perceived her absence in *Postillion.* Miffed and slightly tipsy in her Edwardian Sussex home, torn between pride and jealousy at his new success, she'd donated the book 'to the maids', retreating to the securer ground of Barbara Cartland and Georgette Heyer.

Here at last his parents are given their due, with as discreet and moving an insight into the double bind of middle life as I have read: the untimely desire for parental approbation just when physical frailty demands a reversal of roles. Our parents become our children, yet we continue to kick. Adamant that they be the first visitors to his new home, Bogarde tolerates but doesn't respond to confessions he never wanted to hear, half smiles at stories he has listened to a thousand times before. He is painfully conscious of his mother's obsession with the audience she has lost and he has gained. Why, she asks in bored but felt incomprehension, has he given it all up for this?

It's a reasonable enough question, but for Bogarde, who prefers cinema to theatre – 'I could be miles away when they were eating their peanuts and popcorn' – and intimate correspondence with a stranger to the reality of chance encounters, there appear to be no regrets. In the period covered by this book he made many of his most successful films – *Death in Venice, The Night Porter, Providence* and *Despair* – and though he is illuminating on his work with Visconti, Cavani, Resnais and Fassbinder, even the cinema has begun to pall, and these days he's in it mainly for the money. 'A première', he declares in an overly pungent simile, 'is like a dog returning to its own vomit.'

Is Bogarde a true Timon of our times, or is it rather that he thinks his readers offer him a better class of audience? Perhaps only his parents could have made a stab at the truth. □

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Two poems by W.S. Merwin

Yesterday

My friend says I was not a good son
you understand
I say yes I understand

he says I did not go
to see my parents very often you know
and I say yes I know

even when I was living in the same city he
says
maybe I would go there once
a month or maybe even less
I say oh yes

he says the last time I went to see my father
I say the last time I saw my father

he says the last time I saw my father
he was asking me about my life
how I was making out and he
went into the next room
to get something to give me

oh I say
feeling again the cold
of my father's hand the last time

he says and my father turned
in the doorway and saw me
look at my wristwatch and he
said you know I would like you to stay
and talk with me

oh yes I say

but if you are busy he said
I don't want you to feel that you
have to
just because I'm here

I say nothing

he says my father
said maybe
you have important work you are doing

or maybe you should be seeing
somebody I don't want to keep you

I look out the window
my friend is older than I am

he says and I told my father it was so
and I got up and left him then
you know

though there was nowhere I had to go
and nothing I had to do

A house to the west

Day of harsh south wind built up the black clouds
but no rain fell and near sunset
the air turned still and full of afterlight

on the ridge to the west the tin barn in the trees
the well-digger's derrick
the plywood shack the color of clotted blood
settle onto the gray sky

the bony woman blond all her life
whose house that is
the woman named for a star
screams at her dog
calls baby talk to her goats
and far from the traffic where she was born
she turns into a shadow among the fence posts

when the lovers and children had all got clear of her voice
she said of the red shack It is mine
and she got a driver to move it
one fine morning out onto the hill beyond everything
and then couldn't believe it
and never lights a lamp

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ESPIONAGE
Duncan Campbell

Coming cleanish

After Long Silence
MICHAEL STRAIGHT *Collins* £11.95

Michael Straight was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. Not only the appurtenances of a wealthy American family, but remarkable access to and contact with leading political and intellectual figures of the 1930s and after came his way. And yet he has a slightly tawdry tale to tell.

Straight unburdened himself, in secret, to the United States FBI in 1964. Then he acceded to requests from MI5 in Britain to guide them through the British Communist Party's members and cells, and the sympathetic spirits he had encountered during his time at Cambridge. For ten years after that, he reports, the Security Service's officers would call on him as he passed through Britain, with photographs, lists and papers for further study.

This partial autobiography is a response to the row that began after the Prime Minister confirmed in 1979 that Anthony Blunt had, indeed, confessed to the better part of two decades of covert assistance to the Soviet Union. It was not until some time later that Straight's name publicly became part of that intricate Cambridge tapestry of communist and socialist activism, intellectual élitism, romanticism and homosexuality.

In round two of the long-running drama of 'journalist unmasks Soviet spy cell' in March 1981, Sir Roger Hollis, a former MI5 chief, was claimed by Chapman Pincher to have been a Soviet agent. Straight's role was identified in this account. His 35 years of public silence about his Cambridge friendships ended in March 1981 when a *Daily Mail* reporter materialised in his living room to ask if he would confirm that he had indeed identified Blunt to the British authorities.

Stung by erroneous claims from Pincher and the *Daily Mail* that his 1964 revelations were an attempt to clear himself, and that he had 'served the Russian interest for several years', Straight decided to write his story rather than have Pincher's half-truths become his epitaph. Eighteen months earlier, as Blunt endured his public humiliation, Straight had apparently not felt any need to tell the story of the Cambridge days.

The story is not a confession of espionage, for Straight was not a Russian agent (he says; no-one has disputed it). He resisted orders that Blunt passed on to him in 1937 from the Comintern concerning his future career; and, although Russian agents tried to stay in touch, he was unwilling to co-operate. He had not carried a Party card at Cambridge, although an activist.

Nonetheless, considering the amount of blood that appears near the author's hands throughout, he does not emerge in a pleasant light. Straight puts his own uncertainty of action and purpose down to having a weak character – the frequent fate of a youngest son, he suggests. This is almost a dominant theme. He stresses how he sought brotherhood in the Cambridge communist cell, and felt 'intense love' for its leading lights, John Cornford and James Klugman; and how he was dazzled by the brilliance of Burgess and Blunt. The love, Straight insists, was not physical, although he was surrounded by gay company.

When Cornford died in Spain, Blunt used the emotional pull of Cornford's sacrifice to tell Straight that 'his friends' in the Comintern had issued instructions for him. Although Straight was not prepared to go underground in the way that Blunt wanted, he did stage a suitable grieving breakdown (over Cornford's death) to cover his withdrawal from overt involvement in Cambridge communism.

After the war and the excesses of Stalinism turned the author and others, Straight dallied with the idea of coming clean. He hovered on the brink of going round to the British Embassy to tell all. He chronicles how the moment was finally forced on him, when offered a White House job supporting the arts:

> . . . unwelcome images that I had long ago disposed of came flooding to the surface through the sinkhole of my memory . . . in the same way . . . a (kitchen waste) disposal regurgitates its half digested meal of garbage, slop and dirty water into the kitchen sink . . .

Nevertheless, all has not been regurgitated. Straight recounts, in his most portentous passage, going through files on all his old Cambridge friends with MI5, marking them down as non-members, activists like himself, hard-core members, and 'moles'. He dwells little on the moles, but offers instead the value of clearing others of suspicion. Then, his 'despised' role as an informer came to an end.

Well, not quite. He has implied in the book – and said in television interviews – that perhaps two dozen Soviet moles remain closeted, although identified to MI5, just as Blunt was for 15 years. This statement is surely irresponsible. If he shares the view of the British establishment that the flushed-out moles should be left in peace, then he is foolish if he does not realise that he has provided first-hand evidence sufficient to launch a dozen new mole-hunts.

If he wants to make a clean breast, then he can surely tell all. After all, he confesses that the suicide of Bernard Floud, in the wake of his revelations, may be on his conscience. And that another Cambridge colleague, Leo Long, followed Blunt into the limelight of public humiliation and the contemplation of suicide, possibly at his hands.

For those still alive, and still with their former Soviet allegiance in the closet, this central revelation by Straight can only raise the question of how long remains before a dissident intelligence official unmasks them too. Even in contrition, Straight appears to remain indecisive about the consequences he seeks in publishing his story. □

FICTION
Angela McRobbie

Obsessions

No Place on Earth
CHRISTA WOLF *Virago* £6.95
An Innocent Millionaire
STEPHEN VIZINCZEY *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95
The Collected Short Stories
NOEL COWARD *Methuen* £8.95

No Place on Earth takes place in June, 1804, at an afternoon literary party hosted by local merchant Merten, ostensibly to bring together the brightest of literary and philosophical minds currently contributing to the spirit of the time in Germany. Equally it's an opportunity for the man of commerce to show his generosity, to display his sensitivity to the arts. In the course of the afternoon two kindred spirits, Heinrich von Kleist and Katherine Gunderrode, one a melancholic dramatist, the other a poet, a canoness and an early exponent of women's rights, meet. Each, burdened by excessive emotion, afflicted by an inner turmoil, and bruised by past relationships, cautiously skirts around the other. But despite the anxiety, Wolf describes a very delicious kind of encounter, one which is predicated on a modicum of knowledge about the other but fuelled by more than a modicum of curiosity, and manifested physically, not so much in love or sex, but in the very wordiness of language and talk. In their sense of dislocation, in being out of step with the times, and out of place in this setting, they slot easily into each other's personal narratives.

Gunderrode exemplifies a very contemporary set of conflicts. In her work she seeks to inject her femininity into poetry, only to be patronised by critics as being quintessentially female and therefore not really a force to be reckoned with. In her life she seeks to fuse her womanliness with her independence, only to be spurned by men as succeeding fully in neither. Consequently where she, as a woman, witnesses *herself* being torn apart by forces beyond her control, Kleist suffers through not being sufficiently a man, and thus surveys *himself* being destroyed from within. Like the Guiscard of his drama, he too carries a plague within him, knowing that he can only battle on so far.

It is, of course, a fictive dialogue which Wolf has orchestrated to such effect. Outside of legend each later committed suicide. In the context of the fiction their meeting allows Christa Wolf, a celebrated and tolerated East German novelist, the space to argue out issues whose importance is unquestionable. The relation, for example, between the writer or artist and the State, between intellectuals and workers, between men and women, and between the pull towards being exemplary while simultaneously feeling exempt.

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Interestingly the father of Vizinczey's anti-hero, a second-rate American actor, has something of an obsession with the same Kleist and his doomed Guiscard – an obsession which feeds into his son's ability to battle on when the odds seem well and truly stacked against him. **The Innocent Millionaire** (a successor to *In Praise of Older Women*) is expansive and epic in scale where Wolf's novella is intensive and elegaic. Indeed its scope suggests the cinemascope of precisely those epic movies in which the father is forced, as an extra, to eke out a living.

The son, however, possessing Don Juan-like charm, pursues his childhood passion and overcomes, often hilariously, the obstacles which separate him from the fortune which he eventually locates buried deep under the sea off the Bahamas. I might add that this is a singularly non-sexist adventurer. Influenced though he may have been by Errol Flynn, Mark Niven is much too eccentric, much too single-minded, to bother with learning how to be a patriarch. Instead he carves out just enough space in his psyche to allow the intrusion of romantic love and thereafter treats his lover with nothing but respect. If there is no place on earth for Wolf's Kleist and Gunderrode, Mark Niven ends up owning just about every space on earth, but to no avail. Treasure leads to litigation and love to a jealous husband. As an innocent, Niven cannot be accommodated.

Of course Noel Coward's characters in the **Collected Short Stories** (first published in 1962) all seem to live on until they are ninety. They appear to have got the balance right. Middle-path, middle-class and middle-brow, what could be more accommodating? Actually I like these stories enormously. They are written with such a tangible sense of pleasure, with an ease, even a carelessness, which belies their craft and the skill of their construction. One can just see old Noel pretending to go out partying every night but in fact sweating it out over the typewriter.

Coward's minor actors and actresses playing their hearts out in obscure productions may, along with Vizinczey's Mark Niven, exemplify the ordinariness which befits the personae of popular culture, but they do so with much wit and with little cruelty. □

Among this week's contributors:

STEPHEN MULLIN is a self-employed architect and Chairman of a Community Housing Association.

CHRISTOPHER HIRD is the editor of Insight at the *Sunday Times*.

FAITH EVANS's edition (with Olga Meier) of *The Daughters of Karl Marx: Family Correspondence 1866-1898* (1982) will appear in Penguin later this year.

W. S. MERWIN's most recent book was *Unframed Originals* (Atheneum, 1982); he has a new collection due out shortly, also from Atheneum of New York.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL's *War Plan UK: The Truth about Civil Defence in Britain* was published last year by Burnett Books.

JAZZ
Charles Fox

Changing gear

Camden Jazz Week
The Round House

Embedded within the folk-lore of jazz is the story of how, as a boy, Gil Evans could tell the make of a car with his eyes shut, simply by listening. Certainly that is all of a piece with his feeling for tiny shifts of pitch and timbre, the strategy underlying his work as a composer. That strategy came alive last week within what was, for most of the audience, a highly familiar gathering of musicians, the all-British orchestra with which Evans appeared at the Camden Jazz Festival. With only a limited amount of rehearsal, plus a good deal of gesturing on-stage – mostly a matter of head-tapping and raising fingers like a tick-tack man – Evans showed how a great jazz composer can imprint himself upon a band of relative strangers.

In the past Evans has generally preferred to use other men's tunes rather than write his own. So there were very personal interpretations of pieces by Thelonious Monk ('Friday the 13th'), Jimi Hendrix ('Stone Free', 'Little Wing'), Charles Mingus ('Orange was the colour of her dress') and – on the Monday – George Gershwin ('Here comes de honey-man' and 'Gone' from *Porgy and Bess*), replaced the following night by the Miles Davis-Gil Evans collaboration, 'Eleven' (it's better known, perhaps, as 'Petits Machins'). In addition there were themes by Evans himself, including a totally new piece, still untitled, built largely around John Surman's soprano saxophone, played *au naturel* but also connected to an echo pedal and filtered through a synthesizer (Surman has the stature to make such diversions work).

In the background textures swayed like a tapestry. It was Surman, too, with his baritone saxophone, who virtually deputised for the tuba player that is obligatory in all of Evans's American ensembles. Not surprisingly, the band sounded tighter on the Tuesday, yet at least one soloist, Don Weller (the only musician in the band that Evans had never worked with before) came across more trenchantly at the first performance, especially inside Evans's processional – and Ellingtonish – blues, 'Variation on the misery'.

Gil Evans's half of the Monday concert was preceded by a set from Bennie Wallace, a tenor saxophonist making his debut in Britain. On the evidence of three of Wallace's LPs, I had jumped to the conclusion that he was black. He turned out, instead, to be an elegant and mustachioed young Southern white who would not look out of place in *Gone with the Wind*. One of the best of the new generation of moderates, Wallace can, when he wants to, play in a fast, staccato style like Sonny Rollins or slither like Albert Ayler. Yet hearing Bobby Wellins the following night was to recognise a genuine original, a saxophonist who can use his tone to devastating effect, making a mood hang in the air. And Wellins's pianist, Peter Jacobsen, excelled in 'Bah-lues' (as in the Glaswegian cry, 'Gie' us a bah-lues, Jimmy!').

Wednesday brought Ronald Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society. Jackson, a drummer, has worked with Ornette Coleman. But his present music, hailed, somewhat optimistically, as 'punk jazz' and

Gil Evans

David Redfern

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aimed at a new breed of groundlings, turned out to do little more than alternate the sensational with the sentimental. Fast pieces were very loud as well as very fast, the themes fashionably oblique, with brief, flashy solos. At least the music had impact, stinging the audience – but rather like an updated version of those bands which half a century ago specialised in playing 'Tiger Rag' at 82 bars to the minute, ending with approximations of Louis Armstrong's high Cs. (One of the slow vignettes, incidentally, juxtaposed a banjo solo with trumpet and alto saxophone intoning harmonies by Sankey and Moody, like a flashback to plantation days.)

THURSDAY and Friday had to be missed (I had, however, written in the *NS* about one of the groups – led by Lester Bowie – when it appeared at Bracknell last summer). The brief lay-off also seemed salutary before Saturday's confrontation with Cecil Taylor, who, rather like Strindberg, almost demands that his listeners should be in tip-top health.

Taylor lived up to that by performing non-stop for just over an hour and three-quarters. Luckily the music was more varied than usual, probably because it had to co-exist with a series of routines by the Dianne McIntyre Dance Company of Harlem (one assumes some musical pre-planning went on). Those routines often worked surprisingly well, although, in a ballet entitled *Eye of the Crocodile*, it seemed odd to find European rather than Afro-American movements being used (no pelvic wiggling, nothing faintly like those antics at the Cotton Club). But then Brenda Bakr, too, singing – a trifle too relentlessly – sets of wordless tone-rows, seemed to possess a straight rather than a jazz background.

True, the percussion department suggested a touch of Africa; so did some of Taylor's chanting. But the tautest link with the jazz tradition was supplied by Jimmy Lyons, playing alto saxophone like a proxy Charlie Parker.

Cecil Taylor remains one of the most startlingly original pianists to emerge in jazz, even if his playing very obviously reflects post-Schönbergian methods too. Yet in recent years the complexity and intensity, as well as the duration, of Taylor's music has increased – to such an extent that the demands he makes upon audiences have to be weighed against the likely aesthetic reward. On Saturday, despite the varied programme, that calculated dissonance began taking its toll long before the end was reached. Instead of entrancing the music began to bore. □

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Too much

EVEN Frank Bough, who gave away the prizes on Sunday night, had to admit on Monday morning that **The BAFTA Awards** (BBC-1) was a rather self-congratulatory affair. It was a kind way of putting it. I wouldn't mind so much if these consenting adults gave each other whatever it is they give each other in the privacy of their own homes, but to present us with it as entertainment, two hours of it, like some ponderous durbar of overweight functionaries, complete with elephants, was enough to provoke civil inattention. I caught the bits where *Smiley's People* and the Falklands War were sweeping the board – both over-rated, but true to the spirit of BAFTA, whatever that is.

What's happened is that these TV wallahs have got us looking at their productions on their own terms, so that the passable – the rather crazy *Yosser's Story* for instance – is graded masterful, and the worthless, which is the norm, deemed unexceptionable. They do this with built-in critical programmes, two fulsome listings magazines (why two?) and endless free publicity wherever you look. They are also swamping me with propaganda bumf addressed to the *NS* critic before last.

It seems as good a time as any to suggest that there is far too much television about, passable and otherwise. Now we have Channel 4, it might be a good idea to phase out ITV completely. All the most grisly eye-jam seems to collect round this organisation like flies round a dead dog. *Heroin Street, Opium-roads* and *This Is Your Addiction* could be rehabilitated on one of C4's access programmes. That done, the two BBC stations could be amalgamated, returning us to what everyone agrees was the golden age of TV, the Fifties and early Sixties. It will happen one day; why not soon?

The trouble is that everyone wants to work in TV because it's so *creative*. It isn't, of course; it's just like any other job: chair, desk, phone, pen, speak, write, shout, go home. But the accepted desirability of media jobs lends the whole thing a spurious kind of urgency and importance, which it is probably too late to reverse. In the 19th century it was the Empire everyone wanted to work in. They thought it was great crashing about and exploiting people, so moral reasons had to be found for doing more and more of it. Same with TV, which is now a growth industry paid for by us, its subject race.

Do we need it? TV is government. It is bland, like government. You don't see TV stars blowing their cool any more than you get politicians admitting guilt, pessimism or doubt. They edit that stuff out because it's interesting. TV is a fantasy medium. It doesn't put things into our brains; it takes things out. Sometimes it takes things out we might have found a use for, like consciousness. It is not meant to impart information. Audience research shows that watching television is replacing not only conversation and sex, but sleep as well. The average viewer sleeps less than the non-viewer.

TV's effect on us is similar to that of dreams. Brain wave patterns showing an increase in alpha waves are the same in dreamer and viewer. And it's no good saying we've got access programmes now, because no one watches them. A few university people say they do to the surveys, but surveys show that they are lying. They watch fantasy shows like everyone else. In fact there is only a one per cent difference between the viewing habits of the best and least educated and even this tiny gap is closing.

Is it surprising that more and more people are taking the only way out and escaping from the audience into the studio? The problem is finding enough programmes for them to make.

THE ONLY other way out is to come off the stuff altogether. Viewers like myself taking 4-5 hours a night will have to reclaim their brains by stages. My idea is to watch less and less until one morning I wake up and they've taken the set away in one of its own dreams, also my job. We are fortunate still to have access to the controls on our sets. Access TV! We should use them. 'Off' may be too radical a step just yet. I know I'd rather leave the room than actually kill the thing, even if it is dying of obesity. But the volume knob might be a start. The brain doesn't revolt at this outrage quite so much because what it wants is treacle, not insight.

TV is unique among media in offering us this key to our deliverance. If you ever dreamed of forcing Sir Robin Day to perform menial tasks around your home, this may not be your chance, but at least he'll have to defer to your opinion of him while he's on, his displeasure reduced to a scowl.

As time goes by, the mannerisms of anchor-men will become family jokes. Children will make charts of the number of nylon suits they own. Their wigs will break down under the Inquisition of overhead lighting and confess to vanity and self-delusion. Their lapels alone will speak volumes concerning their owners' true feelings about feminism and unemployment. Light relief will be when they get up to go and you can see how flared their trousers are today. (*Very*, if their lapels are anything to go by. Newcasters' lapels would need a whole section to themselves in any exhaustive study of modern television: are they a kind of semaphore?)

The colour button is another potentially vulnerable area on your set. If Michael Parkinson's electric blue nylon jacket is reflecting too much orange tomorrow morning, pull the colour on him. Then you can sit there pretending it's the Fifties and we're all happy again. □

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THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Tin men

Lorenzaccio
ALFRED DE MUSSET *Olivier*
Short List
MICHAEL RUDMAN *Hampstead*
Welcome Home
TONY MARCHANT *Theatre Upstairs*

There is a fundamental problem to be faced in staging **Lorenzaccio**, and it isn't the obvious one: that the play has a billion scenes and a zillion characters, and was anyway written to be read rather than performed. The National's hit-team of John Fowles and Michael Bogdanov has successfully trimmed and tightened it to the point where we can distinguish between the people, follow the plot, yet still feel ourselves trapped in that overpopulated reptile-house which was de Musset's notion of Florence under the Medici. Actually, this is quite an achievement, since the production is set in what a gigantic, headless replica of Michelangelo's *David* would suggest is the main hall of the Accademia, a wing of the Uffizi, or part of some other gallery or museum. From out of the shadows of this rather obviously symbolic piece of statuary (beauty mutilated, I presume) teem shopkeepers, lords, ladies, bishops, republicans, whores, soldiers, and all the other creatures that have made their homes in 'this cesspit of Italy', as someone calls Duke Alessandro's bailiwick. The cast numbers 45, a lot by the standards dictated by today's theatrical budgets, yet little enough when it comes to recreating the sound, smell, feel of a whole city; and create it they undoubtedly, even thrillingly, do.

No, the problem is a hero more, well, *finished* than exciting heroes should be. Long ago Lorenzo de Medici vowed to assassinate the gruesome Alessandro, out of self-ascribed motives that make him sound like a droll blend of Brutus and John W. Hinckley Jr, a sort of headline-seeking idealist; and his way of carrying out this plot has been to inveigle himself into his victim's trust, becoming his chief pimp and procurer in the process. But even feigned decadence contaminates and, Lorenzo tells us, his mask has gradually become his living skin. Indeed, he feels that everything in him has been irredeemably corrupted, except whatever part of his anatomy still wants to kill the tyrant. It is a strikingly modern analysis, one that might almost have been time-warped to de Musset's world from that of Sartre and Camus; but it brings with it dramatic difficulties. How to sustain interest in a protagonist whose qualms, doubts, internal conflicts are already over, and whose very spirit would appear to be all but extinguished by the time we meet him? How to bring to even vestigial life a character who variously, and accurately, describes himself as 'a tin figure' and 'made of wax'?

It is almost as bad as beginning *Macbeth* with the 'tomorrow' speech or *Hamlet* after the prince's death. The role is all glum post-mortem; and Greg Hicks, playing it at the National, is to be congratulated on the extent to which he does, in fact, hold our attention through such ritual lamentation as 'I know a despair beside which your darkest night is dazzling day'. Everything that whey-faced charisma can achieve, Hicks achieves: which is to say that he gives us everything in the character, with the possible exception of the smirks, the glances and the other tiny symptoms of moral deterioration you might expect from someone who has, after all, taken up residence in a Renaissance blue movie. I can visualise a Lorenzaccio whose final corruption was helplessly to enjoy his corruption. I can imagine one who tacitly signalled from the middle of those sexually ambiguous encounters with his intended victim that wan contempt and bleak self-contempt wasn't all he intestinally felt. But Hicks leaves all such positive displays of depravity to the Duke; and he may be right to do so, since Clive Arrindell, sweaty and flushed, his mouth set in a lycanthropic snarl, performs them with quite enough energy and conviction for one evening.

The piece's final irony is that Lorenzo's grand sacrificial act manages only to perpetuate tyranny in Florence. Cosimo succeeds Alessandro. The final irony of **Short List**, if I read it aright, is similar if smaller. A committee of theatrical bigwigs, charged with giving its stamp of encouragement to some estimable new playwright, fixes on an arro-

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gant young hustler whose waking wet-dreams are success, fame and 'the smell of pussy coming up through the floorboards' of rehearsal-rooms. Though he flings a few token insults at his benefactors, he is clearly one of them, indeed as much 'family' as any Medici; and he'll be absorbed into what's wryly described as the theatre's 'anti-establishment establishment'.

Well, all right, the history of the Renaissance doesn't depend on such events. But, if we're interested in the progress of the theatrical renaissance that allegedly began at the Royal Court in 1956, we should no doubt listen to Michael Rudman. That 'Walter Matthau of Swiss Cottage', as Michael Frayn once dubbed him, made quite a contribution when he was director of Hampstead Theatre Club a few years back. He staged many lively new plays, and presumably rejected many more, perhaps even the tragedy involving Helen of Troy and the Virgin Mary in a Chicago machine-shop that is somewhat disrespectfully invoked in the course of *Short List*. As the programme tells us, he has also sat on three 'playwriting award committees', at least one of which now has a nice, easy solution to what the play suggests may be its chronic financial problems. It should sue Rudman for a share of the profits from his knavish sense of fun.

After all, he writes of its members with genial cynicism, variously accusing them of pomposity, silliness, envy, prejudice, intrigue, corruption and incompetence. Add an orgy, and it might almost be Renaissance Florence; and, as it happens, even that is embryonically provided by Bernard Hill, a malicious, teasing dramatist who at one point does a dance in bra, panties and a skirt of scripts. The characters tend towards caricature, and the evening lacks tension, since we never care who wins; but the jokes keep rolling, and there's always the pleasure, considerable for some of us, of wondering who's really who. Which of the theatre's many playwriting Howards is the Howard played by Mr Hill? Who is Ian McKellen, smilingly domineering in a fur-coat? Who's the burly, laconic, northern dramatist called David, the one who rejects a competitor because her name is too pretentious? Who's the Arts Council creep who burbles on about Kierkegaard and Heidegger? I could tell you, but I won't.

Medusa will shortly be seen on Central TV, proudly showing a model of paras raising the Union Jack at San Carlos, and paying tribute to the 'dignity, calm and kindliness' of the British squaddie. Little does she know. **Welcome Home** involves the aftermath of her crazed adventure in the South Atlantic and has a very different tale to tell: cracked nerves here, a noisome arrogance there, and over there fascist fantasies of dealing with 'the huge tidal wave of sewage threatening to overrun this little island of ours'. Tony Marchant writes of the animal beneath the uniform, but, in spite of his scepticism about the war, not without understanding, sympathy, and a feeling for shades of moral grey. It is an intelligent yet gripping piece, and formidably performed by Tony London, Gary Olsen, Mark Wingett, Ian Mercer, Robert Pugh. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Set a thief

48 HRS. (18)
Plaza
Aspern (PG)
Academy Two
Table for Five (PG)
Odeon, Leicester Square

My favourite movie directed by Walter Hill is still his first, in which Charles Bronson has a short, honest answer to the question about how he makes a living: 'I knock people down.' That was the 1975 *Hard Times*, called *The Streetfighter* over here. The phrase came peculiarly well from Bronson's bleak mouth; there is a tingling finality about it that also extends to suggest what Hill does best – violence with an edge of raunchy humour. When he starts flirting with larger resonances (those posturing anonyms in *The Driver*, the classical-heroic parallels in *The Warriors*), some of us start looking for the nearest exit. Qualified approval, then, for **48 HRS.**, a cop-and-robber caper which moves along at a fair old lick and is often brutally funny. Hulking blond Nick Nolte, a San Francisco police detective with a flourished hip-flask and a beat-up car he drives like a weapon, jerks an ultra-cool black convict (Eddie Murphy) from jail on a two-day release to help him hunt down a vicious pair of cop-killers. This black-and-white teaming allows of a stream of jagged banter, for once none the worse for having been written by four hands (Roger Spottiswoode, Steven E. de Souza, Larry Gross and Hill himself) and at speed: much was coined as they filmed.

This is rough-male-kiss-of-fists territory, of course, with a protracted brawl between Nolte and Murphy resulting in split lips and concealed mutual admiration. Women are fringe-objects, whores or stood-up girlfriends or maenads cut down to size or victims: victims all, really. When a cop asks after another's wife, his buddy snarls, 'Mean as a snake'; Nolte is unusually wordy for a Hill film about the bar-girl bedmate his job keeps absenting him from; after two years inside, his black companion's prime and iterated concern – apart from nailing his ex-accomplices – is to secure himself some 'trim', a new one on me. The sexism is so overt it would be nice to think Mr Hill intends a self-send-up and there are signs enough throughout to permit the charitable (i.e. those who might otherwise feel guilty about laughing out loud at the flip, 'bad' dialogue) to take the whole rattle and bang-bang through night streets and bars and misty Chinatown as outright parody of the rogue-cop genre. Forget, in this cause, Nolte's belated aw-shucks olive-branch to his black brother: 'You know, "nigger", "watermelon", I didn't mean that stuff.'

Concentrate, rather, on Eddie Murphy's startlingly attractive film debut. A comic star of TV's *Saturday Night Live*, he grabs his occasions – and most of the movie – as the beautifully tailored, street-honed young fast talker, whether patronising big Nolte rotten, yuk-yukking away in mock-coon mirth, or (his set-piece) riotously humiliating a country and western bar crowded with menacing rednecks who respond to a flashed badge. 'I want the rest of you cowboys to know something', he grits as he swaggers out. 'There's a new sheriff in town.'

TURNING from the rude vernacular to the anaemic sublime, we have Eduardo de Gregorio's **Aspern,** an updated rendering of the Henry James short novel, spoken in French and shot in and around Lisbon. *The Aspern Papers* has been done over for the stage, notably by Sir Michael Redgrave (one recalls that James always had wistful aspirations as a dramatist), and the actor Martin Gabel directed a previous film version, *The Lost Moment*, featuring Robert Cummings, Susan Hayward and Agnes Moorehead, back in 1947. The mind hiccups at Cummings and Hayward, though reports mention elegance: it was photographed by the prolific Hal Mohr in a studio-built Venice. De Gregorio's cameraman, Acacio de Almeida, has made the most of some pleasantly atmospheric locations but he has been encouraged to do strange things with regard to distance, shifting artily from long shot to close up within the shuttered old house to dramatic purposes that often escaped me. Visually there is fussiness, the wrong sort of mystery.

And, to be candid, the essential Jamesian mystery a-building, so dependent on a superbly planted series of ironies on the page, culminating in an exquisite and painful use of the conditional, goes for precious little in this modernisation, even though Michael Graham's script stays close at key-points to the original. Maybe the material – an Aspern-scholar's fairly ruthless attempt to lay hands on papers belonging to Aspern's vastly old and wary mistress; even beguiling her plain, unyoung niece into complicity – is none too tractable; more likely, the casting's adrift. Alida Valli with a Gertrude Stein haircut is magnificent but she is not antique Miss Bordereau (here become Barter, unfortunate pun in English); Jean Sorel as the critic is just a neat, pretty, petulant face; and marvellous Bulle Ogier, however wan-seeming, quite clearly outpoints Sorel's girlfriend, down on a visit, wrecking the presumptive awfulness of the choice confronting the fellow.

Table For Five, a directorial first from a Robert Lieberman hitherto known for his way with kids in TV commercials, is great while the kids are slamming out adult lines but dreadful when Jon Voight, as their childish, divorced dad taking them on a cruise, has tearfully to explain ma has been killed back home. Richard Crenna is manful as their adoptive dad who harangues Voight in every port. The Colosseum, the Parthenon, a sphinx and a pyramid are in tiptop form, as always. □

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OPERA
Andrew Clements

Grail chase

Parsifal
Lumière Cinema, March 31 to April 20
Parsifal
Welsh National Opera; further performances March 26 (Liverpool), April 2 (Bristol), 16 (Oxford)

Hans Jurgen Syberberg's previous major projects – *Ludwig, The Confessions of Winifred Wagner, Hitler; A Film from Germany* – have carried the Wagner phenomenon as connecting thread. Wagner has come to epitomise the megalomaniac, the irrational element in German culture that obsesses Syberberg, and it's hardly a surprise to learn that his version of *Parsifal* began life as a plan for a biographical study of the composer. That at least is some explanation, if not excuse, for the burden the music-drama is made to bear. Syberberg makes sure none of his original research goes to waste; from the opening credits to the final image four and a quarter hours later he litters Wagnerian memorabilia and allusion through the film in a way that will flatter the student of Bayreuth production and irritate those whose knowledge is less encyclopedic.

Essentially, though, Syberberg's *Parsifal* is a straightforward film of an opera, made entirely in the studio and provided with extraneous glosses. Actors mime to a recorded version of the score made independently of the filming. Neither component is particularly distinguished, and as an attempt to 'interpret' the *Buhnenweihfestspiel*, to tease out its intricate skein of motives and moralities, the film is a notable failure, preferring to suffocate it under the weight of its own history. There are 'ideas' about the way in which the action should be viewed, but they seem to have little to do with *Parsifal* in particular. A number of them – the use of a giant Wagner mask as the set for the Temple grounds; Parsifal impersonated by both a boy and a girl according to his/her psychological state; Wagner's satin jacket as a backcloth for the journey to the Grail temple in the first act – could with little adjustment do useful service in parts of *The Ring* or *Tristan*. Syberberg never manages to refine his icons enough: why, for instance, should the puppet heads of Wagner, Ludwig, Nietzsche, Marx *et al* that are strewn about Klingsor's throne not be equally suitable decoration for the Gibichung Hall in *Götterdämmerung*? Why could not the avenue of flags that leads to the temple be equally relevant in the last act of *Mastersingers?* What do any of them have to tell us about *Parsifal* in particular?

The film labours under the severe disadvantage of a musical sound-track conducted by Armin Jordan (and available on disc from Erato) remarkable for its dullness, lack of perception and an ability to make usually responsive singers such as Robert Lloyd (Gurnemanz) and Yvonne Minton (Kundry) sound totally uninvolved. If the intention was to create a neutral performance upon which the film could lay depth and purpose the plan is never given a chance to work, for image and music rarely move in meaningful synchronisation. Among the actors Edith Clever's Kundry is outstanding; she is responsible for those few moments when the whole ramshackle affair promises to justify itself, and, if Syberberg's direction seems to place Kundry at the centre of the drama, the effect could equally be the result of her obvious commitment when surrounded by a conspicuous lack of the same commodity.

In the current *London Review of Books* David Blackbourn, *à propos* of *Hitler*, calls Syberberg 'the thinking man's Ken Russell'. On the basis of *Parsifal* this is unfair, for Syberberg's artefacts are no more relevant and constructive than Russell's just because they are less obviously sensationalist and more consciously intellectual. Russell too would never produce anything as visually tacky as *Parsifal*: some of the settings would not look out of place in a 20-year-old production at Covent Garden; others – the haphazardly scattered pots of primroses around Gurnemanz's hut – look merely absurd. Laughter should be the least likely response to this of all operas, but I fear it is hard to suppress at several points here.

WELSH National Opera's production claims to be the first seen in Britain outside London for 60 years. In London in recent years we have been only marginally more lucky, for the current Royal Opera staging is notorious for its insensitivity and its predecessor was hardly beautiful to behold. WNO's is designed for touring and I caught it last weekend squeezed on to the shallow stage of the Birmingham Hippodrome. That it still manages to be consistent, and at times overwhelming in the way good productions of Wagner should be, is a tribute both to Mike Ashman's unfussy direction and Anthony Negus's command of the score. The project was begun with Reginald Goodall as musical director, but because of illness he had to withdraw during the final rehearsals. In the careful preparation of singers and orchestra, however, everything bears the Goodall stamp, and it is no faint praise for Negus to say that his conducting has a good deal of his mentor's concern for line and texture. In Birmingham the orchestral playing was often glorious and if the singing was not consistently of the highest standard, it was never lacking in commitment or musical perception. As an antidote to Syberberg the evening could not have been bettered.

That is not to say that Ashman does not produce his own glosses. The Christian aspects of the drama are played down, to the extent that Parsifal is not allowed to make the sign of the cross with the magic spear at the end of the second act; he merely holds it aloft while Klingsor's kingdom crumbles. Simple, elemental myth is predominant and in Warren Ellsworth's Parsifal there is a striking personification of raw, unformed intelligence in the first act, a rangy, natural savage of manifest sexual power. Ashman restores Amfortas's wound to the groin where legend placed it (before Wagner chose to make the Christian parallel more obvious by removing it to the side) and makes Parsifal's uncomprehending view of Amfortas's agonies in Act I the most potent image in the opera. When enlightenment arrives with Kundry's kiss in the second act, the image of the wound has become oppressively intense: the Flower Maidens scatter blood-red petals, the seduction takes place on a blood red carpet. The sheer physicality of this Parsifal makes his emotional and intellectual development in act two the more remarkable and his scene with Kundry becomes the core of the opera, the centre of gravity switched from the opening of the third act where it conventionally lies.

Ellsworth's voice is neither beautiful nor especially expressive, but he sings forthrightly and accurately. There is not much beautiful tone elsewhere in this cast: Donald McIntyre's Gurnemanz is firm and efficient, perhaps less the visionary than the level-headed narrator; Philip Joll gives Amfortas considerable physical presence. Linda Esther Gray's Kundry is less exciting, vocally, than might have been expected, though her control and tone are of the highest class. There is a dry, clinical Klingsor from Nicholas Folwell, inexplicably got up in a 19th-century dress suit, a time-warp that nothing else in the production explains. The production, together with the excellent programme book that WNO has compiled, provides a valuable introduction to the most complex of Wagner operas. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2763 **Set by Snubbin**

The sight of a posse of poets descending upon John Betjeman on his 75th birthday in a recent TV programme made it seem like an up-market *This Is Your Life*. Please let us have up to 150 words from the script of a *T.I.Y.L.* devoted to a living figure likely to find such treatment abhorrent and/or embarrassing. By 8 April.

No 2760 **Set by C. Fever**

Limericks about people from Russia, Italy, Spain or Yugoslavia.

Report **By Anne Dante**

Passing fair. Special hon. menshes to 11-year-old Emma Parsons (surely the youngest comper ever) and to Paul Fletcher, who wrote a limerick in Russian (at least I think it was Russian). Four fish apiece to those printed below.

An incautious dame from Vorkuta
Said Soviet life didn't suit her.
Crying 'Let us have pity!'
The Central Committee
Instructed the *cheka* to shoot her.

ANDY MCSMITH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
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Said a pedant who hailed from Rabać,
When asked in the street for a match,
'Are you seeking a bride,
Or two teams (one each side)
Or the kind that flares up when you scratch?'
GERARD BENSON

There was a young man from Siberia
Whose girlfriend felt somewhat inferior
Till they sailed on the Don,
Had it off and then on,
So now she's a mother superior.
P. W. R. FOOT

There was an old roué from Ronda
Who drove a late-Twenties Lagonda
In which he plied girls
With sherry and pearls
Until they grew helplessly fonder.
W. F. OWTRAM

There was a young man from Leghorn
Who wished he had never been born.
Nor would he have been,
If his father had seen
That the end of his condom was torn.
RETO ROSSETTI

A lovely young girl in Odessa
Told the truth to her father-confessor.
The scandalised priest
Roared and raved like a beast
And immediately tried to undress her.
JOHN STANLEY

There was a young novice from Rome
Who tired of her spiritual home;
She lost all decorum
By fouling the Forum
And pleasuring priests by the Dome.
NAOMI MARKS

A *basso* who sang in Milano
Sang *forte* but thought it *piano*,
His *fortissimo* notes
Frightened tourists in boats
Way up on the lake of Lugano.
MARY LOUISE DARK

An official on tour from Ljubljana
Exhorted the peasants to garner
The crops in their fields;
But, indifferent to yields,
They replied, in Slovenian, *Mañana*.

There was a young man of Trieste
Who believed that plain language was best;
But given the chance
(After moving to France)
He wrote *Finnegans Wake* as a jest.

There was a young lady of Riga
Whose instincts were questing and eager;
But she found no delight
In a casual night
With a British Young Communist Leaguer.
PAUL FLETCHER

At Pisa some shrewd fellow built
A tower that developed a tilt;
He said, 'I foresaw
It would prove a huge draw,
So why should I feel any guilt?'
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

A bold little *senor* from Vigo
Once said to his friends, 'Why don't we go
And sneer at Madrid?'
Which was just what they did,
Till their faces were covered in ego.
WILL BELLENGER

FIRST PERSON

Jeremy Lewis

Last man in

AN ESSENTIAL ingredient of worldly success is the ability to lose, or adjust, one's sense of perspective – to be able to persuade oneself, and other people, that one's daily deeds are of overwhelming urgency and importance, subject to doubt or diminution only in the small, uncomfortable hours of the night, if at all. Even more than the rest of us, the 'successful man' can't afford to contemplate the ultimate – or even the medium-term – transience and futility of most human activities. Let doubt enter for an instant, and all may come unravelled.

Although I often admire and sometimes envy my successful friends, and greatly relish the mechanics and the gossip of my particular trade (publishing), I've always found it hard to take my own career or the claims of the world on the make as seriously as I should; and I have a glum suspicion that this might well have something to do with my lamentable failure to get to grips with our old friend organised sport, and its oppressive stooge, the team spirit. Organised games only make sense to those who can suspend their disbelief, and know that they matter. I never could, and – substituting professional goals for those unhappy objects made from painted wood and netting – I still find the going pretty hard.

At various stages in my school career I remember my housemaster lashing himself into a frenzy of rage at our collective failure to carry off some trophy or other, or foaming with indignation at my coming second to last in the annual school run (I had dreamed of coming last, but was frustrated by a torpid Indian youth); and wondering with the unkind objectivity of a child how it was possible for a man of his age to get so worked up about matters which seemed to me even then to be so self-evidently unimportant.

NONE OF THIS would have mattered had my school fellows regarded the old gentleman's ravings with the same detached surprise as I did. Far from it: even my most indolent and jocular friends became resolute, humourless men of iron as soon as they pulled on their footer boots or strapped on a pad, and I found myself a lonely and unpopular sceptic.

Rugger was a particularly dreadful ordeal. I never began to understand the rules, and without my specs I could see very little of what was going on around me. Occasionally the ball would hurtle out of the sky and strike me a glancing blow on the head, felling me to the ground with a grunt of surprise. If I got hold of the ball – something I dreaded and keenly avoided – I handed it hastily to someone else, usually from the wrong team; my every move was greeted with cries of beefy exasperation. Although I was the largest boy in the house – and therefore assumed to be a natural for the scrum – I was eventually banished to the touchline, where I egged the team on in a sonorous bass, surrounded by 13-year-olds half my height.

Soccer I thought a superior affair, at least from the spectator's point of view; but rather than risk further mortification, I decided to enroll in a refereeing course, which took place during games time and was agreeably devoted to learned discussions about the shape of the ball and whether or not the goalkeeper was allowed to wear a cap, and much demonstrating of the offside rule on the blackboard. My fellow student was an urbane Jewish boy from Golders Green, who was dragged through the mud by his heels when eventually compelled to put theory into practice.

My own initiation was equally unpromising. I awarded a goal after a few minutes of play; the other side protested so crossly and with such conviction that I decided it might be best to cancel the goal, at which I was savaged by my erstwhile champions. It didn't seem terribly important either way; but sportsmen feel strongly about these things, and I soon found myself in hot water again.

And so it continued. As a long summer evening drew to a close, I was sent in as last man to bat, with one run to score and the house championship in sight for the first time in this century, and was promptly bowled out first ball. I crept back to the pavilion, avoiding the gaze of even the weediest junior boy, knowing that none of my team-mates would make light of my disgrace, and that I would be *persona non grata* for weeks to come for failing to strike a lump of leather with a stick.

Only in boxing did I hold my own. I hated being hit, and had no desire to hit anyone else. But I found that if I held my arms out in front of me I could keep the enemy at bay with one hand and mete out mild jabs with the other; and my habit of apologising whenever I hit my opponent seemed to amuse the audience. In the heavyweight finals I found myself matched against a pleasant but rather dim friend of mine. 'Listen', I told him, speaking slowly and clearly, 'I have no particular desire to win and I'm quite happy for you to carry off the prize, but let's not hurt each other in the meantime.'

As soon as we stepped into the ring I realised that he had forgotten everything I'd told him. His familiar look of bovine amiability had been replaced by one of cross-eyed ferocity; when the bell rang he dashed at me with whirling fists and foam-flecked features. I tried to remonstrate, but every time I opened my mouth he banged it shut again with a ruthless uppercut.

Frivolity is all very well, I suppose, but it's hard to avoid one's come-uppance. □

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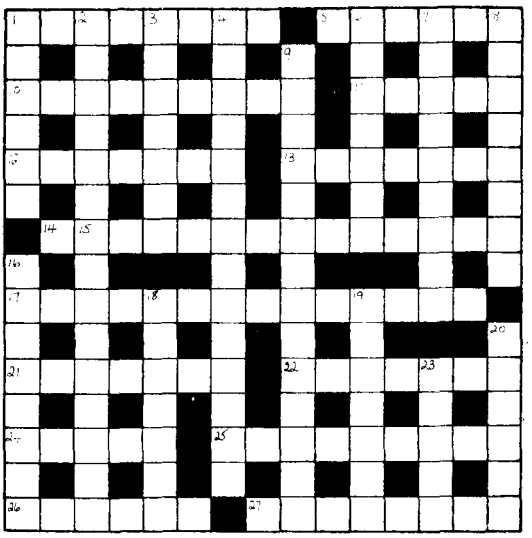
Weekend Crossword 1395

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1395, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 5 April.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

ACROSS

1. Marine creature may go this far south. (8)
5. Girl who becomes a woman of refinement when she leaves the grammar school. (6)
10. Place which among other things gives us backward cultural activity. (9)
11. The library has about a thousand members. (5)
12. Enthusiast needs something to cool him down before a sign of approval is cut short. (7)
13. Huge if that is including writing about people. (7)
14. The odds are you have to practise with string. (8,6)
17. Assets discovered by somebody in my material for writing about a Greek. (5,2,3,4)
21. The police leave carrying spoilt tapes. (7)
22. Leg protection for old international. (7)
24. Saint who is nameless in opera. (5)
25. I drop cash all over the place in ecstasy. (9)
26. Fears that when they have been decapitated mistakes are revealed. (6)
27. Asked the Common Market to distribute food. (8)

DOWN

1. Place for employees. (6)
2. Admiral thus embraced by woman. (5)
3. One who wrote in a stiff or stereotyped style. (7)
4. They choose candidates, but it is so drab being sorted out without voting. (9,5)
6. About half-time Hugh is less mobile. (7)
7. Religious act with car and vessel. (9)
8. Writers in a second employ means of keeping people guessing. (8)
9. Succeeding in getting a degree? (6,3,5)
15. Northerner denies try is converted. (9)
16. Leave country and start going into foreign territory. (8)
18. He strongly desires to see youth in employment. (7)
19. A smaller area in the plot is hallowed. (7)
20. Soul of a tipsy cheerful type. (6)
23. If one is penniless, this drink would be satisfactory in an American state. (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1393

C	L	A	S	H	E	S	■	T	A	R	N	I	S	H
U	■	S	■	E	■	I	■	I	■	E	■	N	■	A
E	X	T	R	A	■	R	E	C	U	S	A	N	T	S
L	■	E	■	T	■	E	■	K	■	I	■	E	■	T
S	T	R	A	W	S	■	G	E	N	D	A	R	M	E
E	■	I	■	A	■	P	■	R	■	E	■	■	■	N
A	S	S	E	V	E	R	A	T	E	■	A	C	E	S
■	■	K	■	E	■	O	■	A	■	A	■	H	■	■
C	A	S	E	■	S	C	A	P	E	G	O	A	T	S
R	■	■	■	T	■	E	■	E	■	N	■	R	■	I
I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T	■	W	O	K	I	N	G
P	■	E	■	A	■	S	■	F	■	S	■	T	■	N
P	O	L	O	N	A	I	S	E	■	T	W	I	N	E
L	■	L	■	C	■	O	■	L	■	I	■	E	■	T
E	A	S	T	E	R	N	■	L	O	C	U	S	T	S

Prizewinners to 1393

Dr J. A. Nelder (St Albans)
O. M. Parkinson (Newton Abbot)
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TYPESETTING BOOB! In last week's Holidays/Travel column the third advert for YORKSHIRE TOURS headed 'Andorra & Pyrenees . . . £40' should have read **'Andorra & Pyrenees . . . £140'.** We apologise to Yorkshire Tours and to any reader who has been inconvenienced by our typesetting error.

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MOSCOW £180, KIEV £170 30 July-9 Aug.
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9 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PW

VSO is grateful to the many individuals, Overseas Development Administration and industrial, commercial and charitable organisations, including Christian Aid, Oxfam, Action Aid, Rotary and the Queen's Jubilee Trust, whose generous contributions make its work overseas possible.

GLC

Working for London

Project Development Officers

Industry & Employment Branch

The Greater London Council is committed to support a wide range of employment-related groups. These include: women's and ethnic minority employment projects, co-operative development agencies, trade union resource centres, and training schemes. Development and evaluation of projects is carried out by the Project Development Unit who report to the Industry and Employment Committee and the Greater London Training Board.

In addition to working with a wide variety of community and trade union organisations, officers will liaise with other parts of the Council and other local authorities. First class communication skills are therefore essential. Candidates should be good organisers, quick to respond to new initiatives, possess sound judgement, capable of assessing financial and legal aspects of projects, and able to work on their own initiative, often under considerable pressure.

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GLC

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-Women's Committee-

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The Women's Committee Support Unit is seeking Grants Development Advisers to work with women's groups and voluntary organisations promoting the interests of women in London. The Women's Committee grant priorities include child care, black and ethnic minority women, women's centres, women with disabilities, health and welfare and elderly women.

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Kathy McGuinness
World University Service (UK)
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London N1 2UN
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8 April 1983

Poetry Review

EDITOR

The Editorship of
POETRY REVIEW

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LISTINGS

FRI 25 MAR

LONDON Nationalisation. First in series of regular monthly debates on key questions facing the labour movement. Spkrs James Curran, Donald Ross, Peter Taafe. 8pm County Hall, SE1. **Org Greater London Labour Party Political Education Committee 01-703 6511.**

SAT 26 MAR

BRIXTON Option for the poor: Liberation and Christianity in Latin America. Day school on liberation theology. 10am-4.30pm St Matthew's Meeting Place, St Matthew's Church, Brixton Hill, SW2 (Brixton tube). Registration £2/£1 unwaged. **Org El Salvador Committee for Human Rights and others. 01-359 1836.**

ROCHDALE Folk benefit night for Whitworth Valley Peace Camp with Tony Hill and Mistral. Lamplighter Club, Dane Street. No admission after 10pm. Adm £1. **Rochdale 344285.**

COVENTRY Day conference and workshops on Peace Education. Films, spkrs, workshops. Council House, Earl Street. **Org West Midlands CND 021-632 6909.**

BIRMINGHAM Enveloping: A Resident's Eye View. One-day conference on government's new house improvement initiative. **Org Shelter/Community Forum. Bookings only 01-633 9377 ext 37.**

SHEFFIELD Beyond the Fragments day school on Alternative Approaches to Local Government. **Contact Hetty Startup, 33 Fellbrigg Road, SE22.**

LONDON The German elections: their significance for European socialists. Spkr Werner Sabiers of Vorwärts. 2.15pm Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Road, NW1. **Org International Foundation Left Europe. Rosemary Ross 05827-5399.**

LONDON Politics of the family. Weekend conference. 10.30-5.30pm Sir William Collins School, Charrington Street, NW1. Adm £3-£8. **Org Socialist Society 01-734 8501.**

LONDON Socialist Countryside Group inaugural meeting. Spkrs incl Michael Foot, Peter Melchett. 2pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. **Org SERA 01-439 3749.**

SUN 27 MAR

LONDON National demonstration against racist laws. Assemble 12 noon, Jubilee Gardens, nr Waterloo Station for open-air festival, followed by march at 1.30 to Downing Street, Home Office, Fleet Street. **Org Campaign Against Racist Laws. Contact Harpal Brar 01-574 8838.**

LONDON Dancing for Riverside. Benefit for the dance at Riverside Studios. Prog incl Merle Park, Royal Ballet, Festival Ballet, London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Ballet Rambert, Ekome – African dance group. 7.30pm, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, EC1. Tickets £2.50-£10. **Org National Organisation for Dance and Mime. Contact Zdena Tomin 01-741 2132.**

MON 28 MAR

LONDON Multi-cultural Arts Festival. Singhalese play – Sri Lankan Arts Forum, 7.15-7.55pm; Mime & dance, plus food fair – Ekome, 8.15-9.15pm. Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, W8. Adm £2.50/£1 unwaged. **Org Shakti Book House. Details: Community Arts NAAY 01-574 1325.**

LONDON 28 Mar-16 Apr *Hedda in India*, adapted by Madhav Sharma. Perfs 7.30pm except 30 Mar at 7pm. Upstream Theatre, St Andrews Church, Short Street (off The Cut), SE1. **Org Actors Unlimited. Box Office 01-928 5394.**

LONDON Nuclear power – the facts about Sizewell public meeting. Spkrs John Valentine, Adrian Atkinson, Connie Mansueto, plus video & refreshments. 7.15pm Lambeth Town Hall, Rm 119. **Org South London Anti-Nuclear Group (SLANG). Contact Janet Sly 01-733 9324 or Tim Brown 01-582 7375.**

LONDON The Labour Party and the Media. Spkr Geoffrey Sheridan *(New Socialist)*. 8pm William Morris Hall, 267 Wimbledon Broadway, SW19. **Org Wimbledon CLP.**

TUES 29 MAR

EALING Tobocco and the Third World. Talk by John Madeley about trading practices of multinationals and the campaign for change. 8pm St John's Church Hall, Mattock Lane, W13. **Org Ealing World Development Action Group and Friends of the Earth.**

LONDON Multi-cultural Arts Festival. Chinese dance & drama plus lion dance – Nancy Kuo, 7.15-8.15pm; Classical Indian dance plus food fair – Priya & Pratap Pawar, 9-10pm. Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, W8. Adm £2.50/£1 unwaged. **Org Shakti Book House. Details: Community Arts NAAY 01-574 1325.**

WED 30 MAR

LONDON Multi-cultural Arts Festival. Dance & drama plus food fair – Asian Arts Group. 7.30-9.30pm Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, W8. Adm £2.50/£1 unwaged. **Org Shakti Book House. Details: Community Arts NAAY 01-574 1325.**

THURS 31 MAR

EASTER CND ACTION. Blockade of gates Burghfield ROF (mixed) and Greenham Common (women only). **Org CND 01-263 0977.**

HAMPSTEAD Public meeting 'For People not profits: Labour's plan for jobs'. Spkrs Ernie Roberts MP, Mike Cooley, John McDonnell. 8pm St George's Hall, Kingsgate Road (corner Hemstal Road), NW6. **Org Hampstead Labour Party.**

LONDON 'The war in Ireland: the socialist solution' public meeting. 8pm Prince Albert Pub, Wharfdale Road, Kings Cross, N1. **Org Socialist Party of Great Britain 01-622 3811.**

FORTHCOMING

EASTER CND ACTION 1 APR 40,000 link arms from Burghfield to Greenham via Aldermaston (mixed). **2 APR** Mass 'die-in' Glasgow. **Org CND 01-263 0977 and (Glasgow) 041-442 6859.**

8-10 APR Days of Action at Daws Hill Peace Camp, High Wycombe, Bucks. **Contact Sean Hawkey, Bourne End 22624.**

8-10 APR Cardiff Has work a future? Weekend conference on alternative strategies for work and education. **Org Foundation for Education with Production. Contact Linda Mansell, 28 Albany Road, Bath.**

9-10 APR London Solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese people. Two-day conference. British spkrs, spkrs from abroad & UN observers. 10-5.30pm County Hall, SE1. Credentials £1 per delegate from LIBERATION, 313 Caledonian Road, N1. **Org CRS London Political Committee/LIBERATION 01-607 0465.**

12-14 APR London International Conference on the Urban Transportation of Nuclear Fuels. Connaught Rooms, WC2. Free. Sponsored GLC. **Applications by 5 April to Patricia King-Smith, Technica, 11 John Street, WC1.**

16 APR London The Politics of Poverty – what future for the poor? Day conf. **Org CPAG 01-242 3225.**

16 APR Over our dead bodies; women against the bomb. 3.30pm Central Hall, Westminster. Adm £1/50p unwaged.

19 APR Leicester. Alternative Defence. Talk by Michael Randel. 7.30pm Friends Meeting House, Queens Road. **Org Leicester CND 0533-57228.**

20 APR London The UK's empty houses and ways of using them. Day conf. 10.30am-4.45pm, 157 Waterloo Road, SE1, Conf Room C (Waterloo tube). £35 incl buffet lunch (£25 for HEO affiliates). Bursaries avail to cover full registration & travel costs. **Org Housing Emergency Office 01-633 9377.**

23-24 APR Bradford Organise to survive. 2-day training seminar for CND groups with Dan Plesch. Peace Studies Centre, Bradford. **Org Bradford Nuclear Disarmament Group 0274-578199/601672.**

1 MAY London May Day Concert for Chile with Quilapayun and The Boys of the Lough. 7pm Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, W1. Tickets £4-£6/£2 unwaged. **Org Chile Solidarity Campaign 01-272 4298.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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NATIONAL THEATRE. 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'Schweyk in the Second World War'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'A Map of the World', 'Way Upstream'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Spanish Tragedy'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines) CC group sales 01-379 6061. 25 & 26 March **BALLET RAMBERT** – **Chicago Brass/L'Apres-midi d'un Faune/Isadora Duncan Solos/Capriol Suite/Pribsoutki.** 12 to 16 April **JOYCE TRISLER DANSCOMPANY.**
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Meetings

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 27 March 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Psychic Laws & Phenomena'. ULT, 62 Queen's Garden, London W2 3AL.

Conferences

LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR GAY RIGHTS NATIONAL CONFERENCE. Saturday 9 April 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Shepherds Hall, Old Market Street, Bristol 2. Registration: £2 (waged), £1 (unwaged). For more information contact LCGR, 3 Raleigh Road, Bristol BS3 1QP. Tel: (0272) 634203 (evenings).

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
The Plantation Workers of Sri Lanka
to highlight poverty and denial of human rights, and to discuss positive action.
Hampstead Town Hall
23 and 24 April
For details write: **Sri Lanka Research and Information Group, 9 Gray's Inn Buildings, Rosebery Avenue, London, EC1.**

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Jon Bloomfield: Year of decision for the peace movement.
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Would advertisers please note that we need copy for the issue dated 1 April by Monday, 28 March, a day earlier than usual. Lineage by 11 a.m. Display by 2 p.m.

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